



The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



Notes from the Board

By Diane M. Dalkin

Greetings FoRRGS Members & Supporters!

Hello June and the start of outdoor living. The birds are chirping happily, the bugs are buzzing along their way and wildlife is busy with their spring/summer routines. Our Board of Directors is also in full gear with plans for upcoming activities, starting with a refresh at our recent AGM in May. We are delighted to welcome our new Membership Director - *Lena Cordell*; Social Media Director - *Mackenzie Clemens*; and Director-at-Large - *Magdalena Muir*. *Thanks for stepping up!* We are also very fortunate to have other long-serving volunteers that continue to support our team, *bravo to them too!!* The Tour Guides are pondering exciting new initiatives, so stay tuned for more news coming soon.

This would also be an ideal time to officially “thank” *Fabian Patino*, our former Membership Director. He brought his technical expertise, professionalism and numerous contributions to the team, and for that we are very grateful. Here’s wishing him the very best at his new job and developing career. Hopefully our paths will cross again. Until then, good luck & happy trails.

The Garden is blooming with new life and the continuous enthusiastic efforts from Head Gardener, *Daniel & his team*. Spring cleaning, planting and copious planning are underway. Regrettably not everything over-wintered in the greenhouse and the holding beds; yet there’s still plenty of plants material to add to the garden.

As you may have heard, we’re having our annual **Plant Sale & Garden Stroll** this month at **Reader Rock Garden: Saturday, June 10th 2023 at 12:00 Noon-3:00 PM.** **Please note: cash & cheques will be accepted for purchases.** We’re suggesting that you bring your own trays to transport your potted plant purchases safely home, just a responsible environmental consideration. We will also have a Tour Guides’ table adjacent to the Café to answer any questions you may have and they will offer garden tours upon request. This year, *FoRRGS is celebrating our 20th anniversary* working collaboratively alongside the City of Calgary Parks team. While Reader Rock Garden is our main focus, our volunteers make it ALL happen! And, we plan to acknowledge their fabulous efforts at this event. Cake and draw prizes seem appropriate for the merriment, so make sure to leave some time to celebrate & have some fun with us too - scheduled at 2:00 pm. *All members are welcome.* Just a gentle reminder to have your membership up-to-date or join us to take part. This coveted event is *exclusive to FoRRGS members*, as we want to thank-you for your continuous support of the Garden. Online is the preferred method of payment for Membership and a 3-yr term offers some savings. See our website for more details. But we have alternative options for your convenience. We’re really looking forward to seeing you in-person once again!

Let the fun begin!



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FoRRGS Team

President - Diane Dalkin
 Vice-President - Sue Gryzenhout
 Treasurer - Victoria Arling
 Secretary - Catherine Ranger
 Membership - Lena Cordell
 Webmaster - *Vacant*
 Social Media - Mackenzie Clemens
 Directors - Bruce Dunlop, Colleen McCracken,
 Magdalena Muir, John Percic
 Past President - Lindsey Boida

Intro to Orchids & Cypripediums

By Diane M. Dalkin

Orchidaceae is the second largest family of flowering plants, with ~ 28,000 currently accepted species, distributed across 763 genera¹. They are found nearly worldwide. Orchids are perennial herbs and feature unusual bilaterally symmetric flowers, with masses of pollen known as pollinia, and tiny, dust-like seeds. Many are grown as ornamentals for their showy flowers, and several are of economic importance as a source of vanilla flavoring.

Cypripedioideae is a subfamily of orchids commonly known as “terrestrial orchids”, Lady’s slipper orchids, Lady Slipper orchids, Slipper orchids, Moccasin flower and Venus’ shoes. The botanical name describes the form of the flower: *cypripedium* means slipper of Venus.

Cypripediums are also found across much of the Northern Hemisphere, including most of Europe and Africa, Canada, USA, Mexico, Central America, China, Central Asia, and Russia. However, even though they are considered “hardy”, some are listed as “endangered” due to their rarity in the wild. Several species are even legally protected in some regions, with the destruction of their natural habitat and/or over-collection by zealous admirers that prize these flowers for their captivating beauty. Understandably with current environmental concerns there are aggressive conservation efforts to protect and restore these showy plants to their native ranges.

So, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that Mr. Reader’s original plant list also had several Ladyslippers as part of his inventory. These included: *Cypripedium acaule*, *C. arietinum*, *C. calceolus*, *C. californicum*, *C. candidum*, *C. hirsutum*, *C. japonicum*, *C. macranthum*, *C. montanum*, *C. parviflorum*, *C. passerinum*, *C. pubescens*, *C. reginae*, *C. speciosum*, and *C. spectabile*. Not all of these currently reside in the Garden, but the Head Gardener has re-introduced a few. They usually bloom in June, so, if you’d like to see them in-person, a timely visit to the garden is encouraged.



At Reader Rock Garden, near the Lower Pond and across from the Café, you might encounter patches of the spectacular pink and white *C. reginae*.



Dotted throughout the Garden are clusters of yellow *C. calceolus*. These

perky Ladyslippers look like they’re dancing eloquently in several locations.



Alternatively, in the wild, one of the many memorable



sights on a hike in the Canadian Rocky Mountains might be a discovery of a large patch of *Cypripedium montanum*. These elegant white Ladyslippers are sometimes tinged with purple, and the twisted linear petals and sepals can be reddish brown or purplish brown. If you are fortunate enough to come across these rare beauties, admire them, but be



careful not to disturb. These wildflower orchids do not transplant well and should never be plucked. The flowers wilt quickly once picked and the removal of the flower also kills the whole plant. Like most orchids, these plants depend on compatible mycorrhizal associations, that is fungi in the soil; a complex symbiotic relationship exists. Furthermore, the gland-tipped hairs on these plants can be irritants, thus they're classified as medium poisonous severity.



DO NOT DISTURB

Despite their seductive lure, terrestrial orchids are notoriously difficult to propagate, grow, and coax to thrive; plus, they take many years to mature. The challenges start with the plants' complex reproductive biology and orchid seeds are like dust, nearly microscopic. Thus, it's best to leave this to the experts [which regretfully I am not]. So, if you would like to add Ladyslippers to your home garden, some species are available in specialized nurseries. We are fortunate to have local growers right here in Calgary. "Garden Slippers" is one such business that has an online catalogue; see: <http://www.gardenslippers.com/>. And the annual Orchid Show is another venue to check-out the dazzling world of Cypripediums. This year, for the first time, FoRRGS participated in this event on June 4th & 5th and what an amazing experience it was!

It's easy to see how very little imagination it would take to see these distinct flowers as pretty moccasins worthy of a romantic tale or two. In my research I came across several charming stories as part of the plants' folklore. As with most oral traditional

tales, the stories varied with the tellers. But the gist of these narratives usually involves a young girl that encounters some sort of hardship and the flowers were said to bloom where her suffering took place or where she overcame her challenges or where she lost her moccasin or in her honor. The story line is usually optimistic with triumph of goodness, albeit tragedy and misadventures may enter the fold too. Yet, in the conclusion, the flowers stand proudly to memorialize the lessons learnt of bravery and courage and her valiant efforts.



However, Ladyslippers weren't simply loved for their beauty, they were also a source of Native and herbal medicines for numerous ailments and conditions. Mainly the rhizomes were used for medicinal purposes; the remainder of the plant could cause allergic reactions. Clearly these practices were eventually abandoned due to the scarcity of supply.

This colloidum Cypripedium product claimed to "allay excitement, irritability, inducing calm & a cheerful state of mind, promoting rest and sleep". In the 1800 & 1900s, it was a substitute for American valerian.



These distinctive flowers draw admirers in to take a closer look. Their unique structures, forms, sizes, and colours are varied; some are large, others tiny; spotted &/or striped.

Exquisite Ladyslippers easily enamor plant collectors. Perhaps their rarity and beauty add to their mystical qualities; they almost seem magical, evoking pleasant memories of childhood fairies and possess an otherworldly quality about them.



Lady's Slipper Orchid
Cypripedium calceolus

These orchids are/were indeed beloved plants – sometimes too much; history has shown us that flower fervor can take a toll with over-demand causing destruction of natural habitat.

Thus, understandably there are now aggressive conservation efforts to protect and restore these showy plants to their native ranges.

As responsible gardeners we too must do our parts to protect and respect nature.

If you want to learn more, the **Foothills Orchid Society** can get you started to delve into this interesting passion; see their website at <http://www.foothillsorchidsociety.com/membership>. If you simply want to see some spectacular Cypripediums in-person, then, **Reader Rock Garden** offers just that.

References:

1 – Christenhusz, M. J. M. & Byng, J. W. (2016). "The number of known plants species in the world and its annual increase". *Phytotaxa*. **261** (3): 201—217. doi:10.11646/phytotaxa.261.3.1 Cited in Wikipedia

**Friends of Reader Rock
Garden Society's**

Members-Only
Annual Plant Sale & Garden Stroll

Saturday, June 10, 2023
12:00 Noon - 3:00 PM

Plus, we will be celebrating our 20th
Anniversary.
Free admission and parking.
It is A Family Fun Event.

Reader Rock Garden
Corner of 25th Avenue SE & Macleod Trail S.
South of Eriton C-Train Station
www.readerrock.com
Email: info@readerrock.com

National Historic Site

♻️ For environmental consideration ♻️.

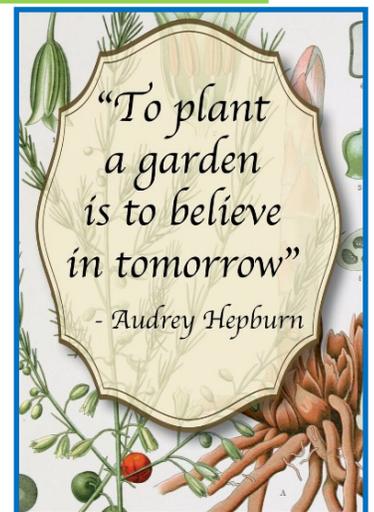
Please bring your own trays to transport your potted plant purchases home.
And yes, we do welcome the return of the pots after you've planted them.

Recycling is important!

Thanks for your assistance!



Have a safe & fun summer!





NEW - We're delighted to announce that **ALCLA Native Plants** is now partnering with FoRRGS to promote native plants and Reader Rock Garden.

Starting this 2023 season, ALCLA Native Plants will be offering a **5%** discount on live plants to *FoRRGS members*. You'll just have to mention your name and they'll verify eligibility. See their website for a detailed plant brochure; alternatively, you may call or email to order plants. Visits to their outdoor nursery, located in Bearspaw are currently by appointment only.

Did you know that ALCLA Native Plants carry plants and seeds for over 150 species of grasses, shrubs and wildflowers native to Alberta? These are regionally sourced to preserve genetic diversity and ensure climate tolerance for the Calgary area.

Email: info@alclanativeplants.com

Phone: 403-889-4795

Website: <https://www.alclanativeplants.com/>



Thanks Ben & Latifa!!



***Please Consider
Renewing Your
FoRRGS Membership***

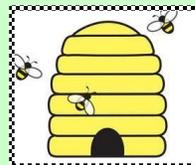
You'll need this to partake in our Plant Sale.

***A three-year option offers savings and less annual work.
Plus it can be done Online for your convenience.***

It's super easy, really!

See Our Website

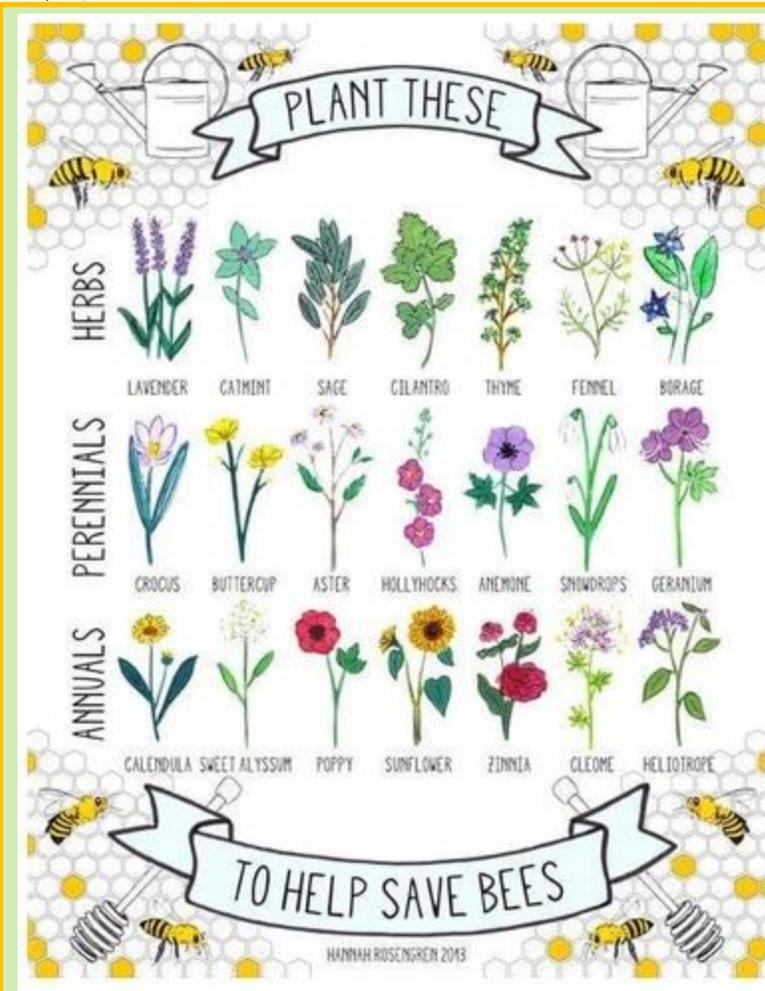
<https://www.readerrock.com/>



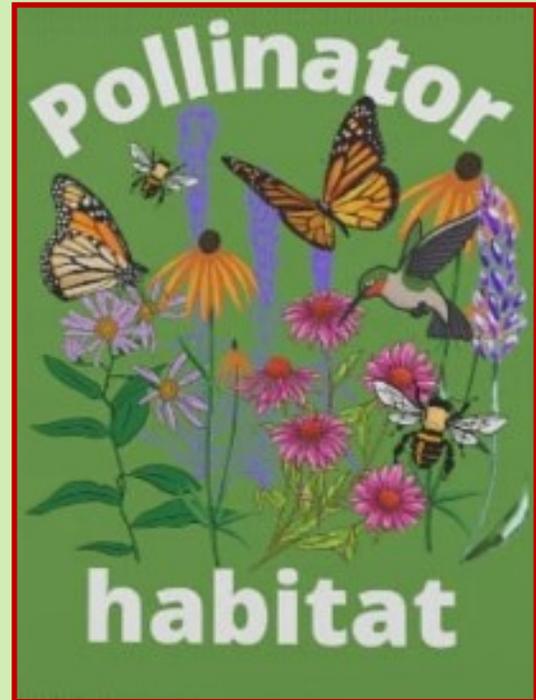
Thank-you!

If you have any concerns

Please email us at info@ReaderRock.com



Perhaps consider some of these plants to **welcome pollinators** into your garden ... Lavender, Catmint, Sage, Cilantro, Thyme, Fennel, Borage, Crocus, Buttercup, Aster, Hollyhocks, Anemone, Daffodils, Snowdrops, Geranium, Calendula, Sweet Alyssum, Poppy, Sunflower, Zinnia, Cleome, Heliotrope, etc. ...



6510 – 1A ST SW
Calgary, AB
T2H 0G6

NEW - We're thrilled that **Garden Retreat** is now partnering with **FoRRGS** to offer members a sweet deal. They provide unique, high quality products including plants and garden accessories [in/outdoors].

Starting this 2023 season, *Garden Retreat* will be offering a **10%** discount to *FoRRGS* members [on live plants only, not bulbs, nor plug program].

We'll send you the *account code* via *email* for eligibility.

Website: www.gardenretreat.ca

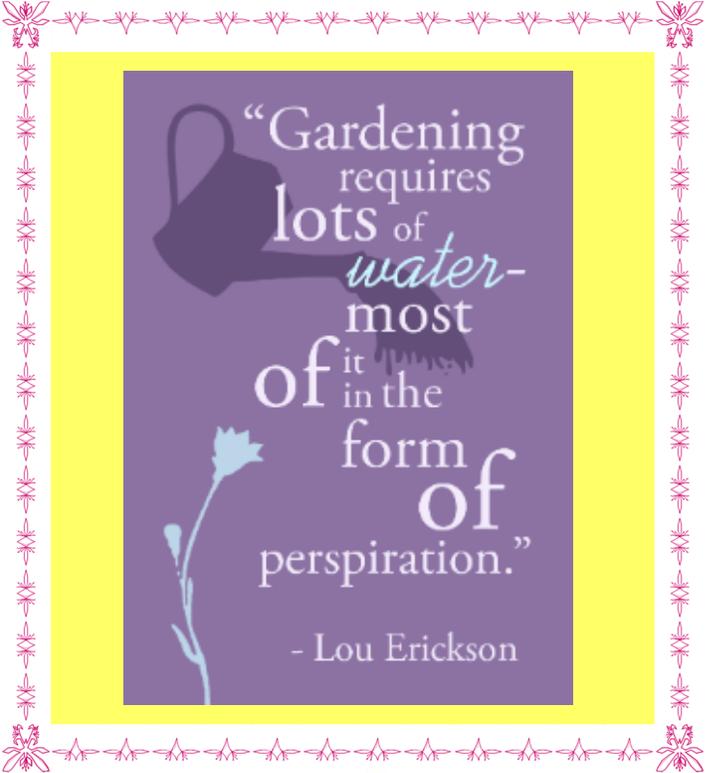
Email: sales@gardenretreat.ca

Phone: 403-255-7097



Thanks Lora & Team!





July
2,
2023
High
Tea

High Tea Reader's Garden Cafe

SUNDAY, JULY 2ND 2023
AVAILABLE SEATING TIME 3-3:30PM
RESERVATION REQUIRED



Now Open for the Season!

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

*Reader's
Garden Cafe*

The **Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS)**

Mark Your Calendars

CRAGS upcoming events:
June 8 & 11, 2023
Speaker series & workshop!!

See their website for more up-to-date happenings

www.crag.ca/events

Lakeview Community Association Hall
6110 - 34 Street SW

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