



The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



President's Message



By Diane M. Dalkin

Hello FoRRGS members & supporters!

In our complicated world, harrowing news headlines seem to dominate worldwide. However, there are still many reasons to *stay sunny in your soul*. Focusing on goodness around us helps to build remarkable resilience to difficult realities and cuts through the negative noise. **Reader Rock Garden** continues to offer peaceful repose, learning opportunities, nature's abundance and so much more. For the most part 2023 was a good year at the Garden!

This past summer we celebrated FoRRGS' 20th anniversary at the Garden, a strong testament to the attraction of this very special place. Yet this also speaks to the wonderful, *caring people* and the many connections our Board and volunteers offer. Respectful friendships are readily cultivated. We are truly grateful for their generous presence! On Pages 3 & 4, we introduce two more fabulous individuals from our dedicated team. **All** our volunteers contribute whole-heartedly in so many ways, along side the dedicated City Parks staff. But it's also great when we can welcome a new Board member, *Magdalena Muir*; thanks for joining the Team! We're looking forward to working together ... fresh ideas, diverse skills, & fun times always gratefully received. And of course, in the same light, we must acknowledge our "Garden Hero"; see Page 6.

A lot was accomplished this year too. *Daniel Walker*, the Head Gardener, summarizes the work of his energetic team of City Gardeners and volunteers - see Page 5.

It's always important to remember that the Garden is rooted in history: "*From the Archives*" touches upon one of Mr. Reader's innovations which impacted gardening in Calgary - see Page 2.

In June, our "*Members-only*" Plant Sale continued to be a resounding hit; so, we're going to keep it that way - *a private, exclusive event - just for you, our supporters*. Next *May 26, 2024* we're booked for another exciting plant sale, so mark your calendars to join us. Please make sure your membership remains current and up to date too. Additionally, perhaps buy a membership for your family & friends - after all - it's *the season of giving*.

As winter approaches may you stay warm, safe, and well; enjoy the quiet times, a bit of hibernating indoors with an occasional jaunt outside for some vitamin D, and of course the Holidays ahead, however you celebrate, keep an uplifting perspective ... a bright future is possible ... with much gratitude ... Best Wishes For ...

Peace & Joy, Happy Hanukkah, Yuletide Winter Solstice, Merry Christmas, etc.

See you in 2024 !!!



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FoRRGS Team

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



From the Archives:

The Calgary Daily Herald – June 24, 1919

Transcribed by Diane M. Dalkin

Just one example of Mr. Reader's many innovations, awareness of the environment, careful water consumption, repurposing, and recycling materials – Bravo Sir!

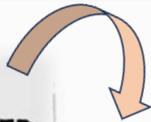
“Supt. Reader Invents A Clever Watering Device”

Does More Work at Less Cost and Utilizes Unsightly Piping

**SUPT. READER
INVENTS A CLEVER
WATERING DEVICE**

***Does More Work at Less Cost
and Utilizes Unsightly
Piping***

Central park is continually admired by citizens who visit it or pass through it on their way to and from the city, and many wonder how the lawns and shrubs are kept in such a fresh, green condition, especially during the hottest of weather. The secret lies in the new surface irrigation plant which has been installed there by W. R. Reader, superintendent of parks. The system, which reaches all corners of the lawn and also looks after the shrubs and flowers along the sides of the park, consists of pipes laid about one inch below the surface of the grass in narrow open trenches. These pipes are drilled at equal intervals with small holes which are capped by studs. When the water is turned on, the pipe thus supplies a series of miniature sprinklers which are so arranged that they cover all the ground.



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Equal Distribution

Two of these pipes, laid parallel to each other about thirty feet apart, can water a stretch of ground about sixty feet wide and give every inch of it practically the same amount of water. The pipes which are placed around the edge of the park for watering the

shrubs and flowers are elevated.

This new system is one of Mr. Reader's pet ideas, and so far as he knows has never been tried anywhere else. Experiments proved that it was an excellent idea and so the whole Central Park was laid down. It does away with a great deal of labor and in no way spoils the look of the park. The pipes are almost invisible from a short distance.



Central Memorial Park

The system is in use to a small extent in the municipal nurseries but outside of this is not used anywhere else in the city. However, it has proved so successful and saves so much expense that the Parks Superintendent has great hopes of eventually installing it in all the parks. Sometimes in the dreamy future it may even be possible to install it in the boulevards of the city and then there will be no trouble in keeping them always green and fresh.

All of the pipes used in the Central Park scheme were taken from the old unsightly “chicken coop” trellis for vines which has stood there for some years. Half of this ghastly structure has been taken down and replaced by a very artistic rustic structure. With very little trouble the pipes which had been used for the trellis were drilled and fitted together for the irrigation system. The pipe costs slightly more than hose and will last anywhere up to thirty years, while it takes careful handling to make hose last a few years.





Volunteer Spotlight!

By Diane M. Dalkin

People make the difference; they are the strength and force behind keeping the Garden's legacy alive. We celebrate their generous contributions on this year's 20th anniversary of FoRRGS efforts at the Garden. It's the perfect opportunity to focus on some of these special individuals with BIG hearts that make the Garden thrive with interesting personality! Following the Fall issue, here's Part 2 ...

May we introduce you to:

Victoria Arling – Board Treasurer



Q: Question: *Your hometown?*
Nelson BC

Q: *When did you arrive in Calgary?*
1977

Q: Favorite Book [s]/movie[s]?
Book: "The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Nighttime".
Movie: any 80s musical biopic

Q: Have a favorite saying or perspective?

If the answer is no, then wait and think of another way to ask.

Q: Hobbies or non-work related interests?
Playing soccer, dance for exercise, sewing, biking as transport, volunteer work in the arts, conservation

Q: Career paths/work experience?
I am retired from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency where my last position was the Manager of the Microbial Contaminant Unit.

Q: Where & what did you study as an adult?
Since getting my BSc in Food Science at the University of Alberta, I have taken courses in English riding and jumping, ballet and other dance styles, and love learning new craft techniques like cyanotype and flower pressing.

Q: Previous/current work experience?
I'm currently working part-time at The Naked Leaf Tea

Shop in Kensington

Q: Professional affiliations or publications?
I am a minor author of scientific journal articles on food safety incidents, bacterial method development and method validation.

Q: What do you do at Reader Rock Garden [RRG] & how long have you volunteered?
I started volunteering at RRG in 2021 as the Treasurer on the Board. This summer (2023) I have also volunteered as a gardener once a week.

Q: Best thing[s] about RRG?
Urban oasis for wildlife, the many unique and interesting flowers, the incredible preservation of the site despite years of neglect including the stone swails and the markers that indicate plants that made it through the dark years, the dedicated garden staff, the central location, handmade historically accurate willow benches, the vegetable garden that the cafe uses, the annual plant sale.

Q: Most challenging thing about RRG?
It can be difficult for those with reduced mobility to enjoy it although there are parts that are accessible, and I have seen many mobility challenged people brave the hill.

Q: What have you discovered at RRG, learnings?
I learn about plants, pests (both animal (including human) and vegetable) and pollinators every week when I volunteer in the garden.

Q: What would you like the public to know about this special place? You can get there on the LRT (Elton Station) and what is blooming changes every week.

Q: Must-see highlight[s] onsite?
There's a different one each week, including gorgeous martagon lilies, the first Hepatica of the season, and many other oddly beautiful plants throughout the growing season.

Q: Other things you'd like to share with us?
When I meet people, they either say "never heard of it" or "that place is amazing". If you are one of the former, all it takes is a visit to make yourself one of the later.





May we also introduce you to:

Lena Cordell – Membership Director



Q: *Your hometown?* Calgary

Q: *When did you arrive in Calgary?* Been here my whole life!

Q: *Favorite Book / movie[s]?*

Favourite movie is Titanic. It is a masterpiece and a classic! One of my favourite books is called “The Gene: An Intimate History” which gives a fascinating account of humani-

ty and how we have come to where we are today.

Q: *Have a favorite saying or perspective?*

Go and wake up your luck.

Q: *Hobbies or non-work related interests?*

I participate in a sport called orienteering. It involves running around a park or a forest with a map and a compass to find different flags. It’s like a fun scavenger hunt!

Q: *Career paths/work experience?*

While I started out as an electrical engineer, I have now changed paths and am a business analyst at the AESO (Alberta Electric System Operator).

Q: *Where & what did you study as an adult?*

I completed my electrical engineering degree at U of A.

Q: *Previous/current work experience?*

I previously worked at AltaLink, which is a transmission line owner and operator in Alberta.

Q: *Professional affiliations or publications?*

None, yet.

Q: *What do you do at Reader Rock Garden [RRG] & how long have you volunteered?*

I am the Membership Director and have been with FoRRGS since 2022.

Q: *Best thing[s] about RRG?*

The other board members have been amazing and helped

me get up to speed quickly. Thanks especially to Diane for her mentorship and Fabian, the previous Membership Director, for handing off his role so smoothly.

Q: *Most challenging thing about RRG?*

I am not a gardener myself, so I quickly get lost in all the Latin names of the plants! But I’m learning.

Q: *What have you discovered at RRG, learnings?*

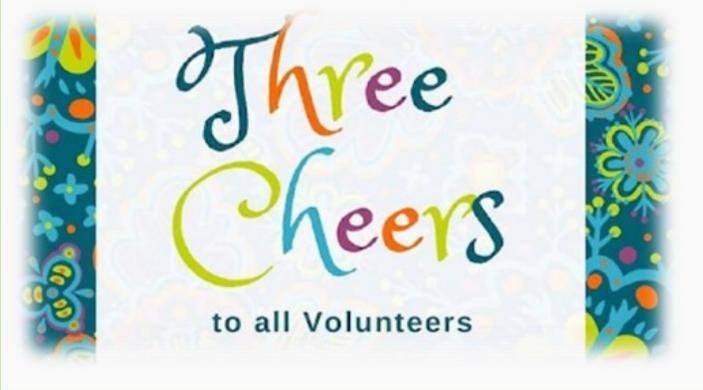
I have discovered the complexity of running an organization like FoRRGS. There are so many pieces that all work together, and we wouldn’t be successful without the diverse group of volunteers who all bring their unique talents.

Q: *What would you like the public to know about this special place?*

I would like anyone who is interested in local history to visit the garden. It holds a special place in the history of our city.

Q: *Must-see highlight[s] onsite?*

I have to throw in a plug for the annual plant sale which is definitely something you don’t want to miss!



Attention active FoRRGS Volunteers ... For those of you that weren't able to attend our Fall Wrap-Up & Volunteer Appreciation event in September. FYI - We handed out the **new, snazzy green FoRRGS nametags** to attendees. Please note that we'd like to get these to you for next season; but, *no rush of course*. If you might be meeting with Daniel/Bruce and/or Colleen over the winter, please remind your Team Lead to bring your nametag along.



Updates From Daniel:

By Daniel Walker

Season Greetings FoRRGS members!

I want to start off by saying a big **“Thank-You”** to all of the amazing FoRRGS volunteers as well the dedicated Master Gardener students and City of Calgary volunteers that helped the garden achieve many projects this year. It was challenging this season with last-minute cancellations due to smoke, rain, and my impromptu surprise meetings. Thank you for your patience throughout all of this.

A highlight was the creation of the Native Plant bed next to the Chapel, of course the heat wave stressed out the new plants. But the resiliency of native plants showed later in the season when the plants rebounded nicely and pushed out a lot of new growth. I’m very excited to see how everything returns for the spring of 2024.

One of the downfalls as they sometimes happen, was the failure of some of the seedlings this year due to bad batches of soil that caused dampening off. It was sad to see many of these treasures slowly die, especially the blue poppies. The plant sale was still highly successful even with the crop failure with lots of seedlings and divisions coming from the garden itself. However, seeds were purchased again as were new pots and soil, so here is to a better 23/24 propagation season. I’m excited to share with you some of the new plants that will be growing for the garden. Stay tuned for updates in the upcoming newsletters.

Spare plants were donated to our new partner the Calgary Zoo and Dorothy Harvie Gardens; as well there are talks with the University of Alberta garden to help them repopulate their alpine garden that is being renovated. New vendor (Fieldstone Gardens) from the US sent us many named Astilbe, Trollius and Peonies to add to our collection. Collaborating with them was a treat, as you can sense a passion for plants, and they loved the historical side of the Garden.

Next time in the garden please be on the look out for the red squirrels that are returning to the garden, we have two pairs now and they are giving the big black and grey squirrels a run for their money. Also, hummingbirds are finally figuring out that we have a “few” food sources for them and have been spotted around the Triangle bed and the High Rockery.

Lots happening already as you read this, seeds are being stratified, plant orders are being created and placed. Before we know it there will be greenhouses full of plants and a new year ahead of us.



Have a great Holiday Season and see you all in the Garden.



Head Gardener



“Winter reminds us that everything needs some quiet time.”





GARDEN HERO 2023!!



By Diane M. Dalkin

You may recall that we introduced the new Head Gardener, **Daniel Walker**, back in our Winter 2017 issue. If you missed that specific newsletter, we have back issues on our website for your reading pleasure. Since that time, Daniel has exceeded our expectations by leaps & bounds! We consider him to be our garden hero, following in the steps of Mr. Reader himself. So, it was an easy extension to nominate him for special recognition with the *Canadian Garden Council's* "Garden Heroes 2023" program. Here's the background we presented as part of this nomination:

Daniel is employed as a City of Calgary Parks gardener, assigned to this National Historic Site, Reader Rock Garden; he performs his duties with such dedication, passion, and care. Additionally, his work practices offer "above and beyond" the call of duty; his diligent commitment to sustainable horticulture and the Reader Rock Garden is indeed commendable. Daniel volunteers with several local Non-Profit gardening groups, including ours - Friends of Reader Rock Garden Society (FoRRGS), and the Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS), the Foothills Orchid Society, the North American Iris Society, etc. Additionally, he:

- ◆ Upholds responsible and eco-friendly ideals for the Garden,
- ◆ Champions habitat for wildlife and pollinators,
- ◆ Authored articles about the unique plants onsite,
- ◆ Regularly provides content for our quarterly newsletters,
- ◆ Researches heritage plants,
- ◆ Grows extra plants in the greenhouses for our annual plant sale,
- ◆ Started an onsite herbarium for educational purposes,
- ◆ Provides us with plant profiles and updates for our social media outreach,
- ◆ Ensures that our volunteers are enriched with educational sessions each and every time they are present at the Garden,
- ◆ Advocates a challenging goal to annually increase plant diversity back into the inventory; and
- ◆ He was creative in responding to Covid restrictions/limitations with new processes to ensure safety.
- ◆ Most of these efforts and others are/were completed after regular hours on his own time, in addition to his required duties.
- ◆ Since early 2017, Daniel has continuously surpassed expectations and gone the extra mile for the Garden, cheerfully interacting with the public/visitors, supporting our group, fostering connections with the local community and afar, and much more than can be itemized here.
- ◆ This exemplary ambassador is the ideal candidate and worthy of your acknowledgement, a genuine leader and is an inspiring Garden Hero!

The *Canadian Garden Council* agreed with our assessment and recognized his efforts with this honorable certificate. See this link for further details at:

<https://livethegardenlife.gardenscanada.ca/garden-heroes/>.

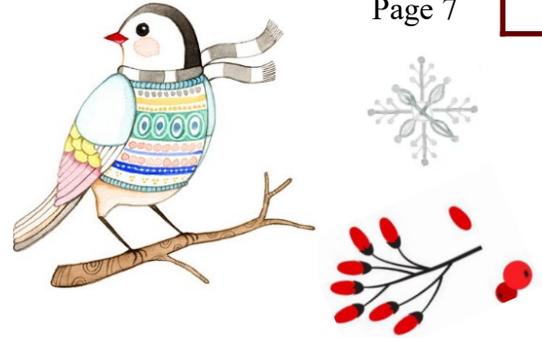
The Garden has matured and blossomed while it has been under Daniel's care and stewardship!

How lucky we all are to have him and his dedicated team at **Reader Rock Garden**.





Best of The Season
Meilleurs Voeux!



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

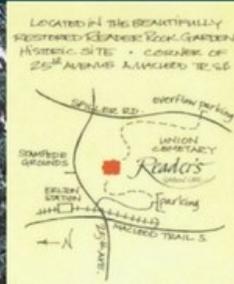
- ◆ For **Daniel, the City gardeners & Parks staff** that always go above and beyond their regular duties!

Good Luck Lindsey B. and
Thank-You for all your help over
the years!!!

☞ Farewell & Best Wishes ☜



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 **April 26, 2024.**

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.

**Best to check out their website for
upcoming events:**

See: www.crag.ca/events

