

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings



President's Message

By Diane M. Dalkin

Hello FoRRGS members & supporters!

As I write this Spring newsletter, lovely large snowflakes are gently waltzing down to provide much-needed moisture to our landscapes. While nature prepares our gardens for the coming growing season, I still keenly await the forecasted warming trend. Despite the current below seasonal temperatures, daffies, tulips, hepaticas, flowering trees and song birds will eventually be here to greet us in the coming weeks. Plus, the daylight is noticeably longer and our clocks will be springing forward soon. The harbingers of Spring are always gratefully welcomed.

At this time of year, it's good to consider starting "seeds". After a lengthy hiatus, we'll be participating again at the Calgary *Seedy Saturday* on *March 23*, at the new venue. There's a long list of interesting exhibitors at this *free drop-in event* and seeds from Reader Rock Garden will also be available for a monetary donation of your choice. See page 5 for more details.

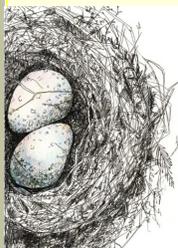
Other significant 2024 dates are noted on the following pages. First up on the list ... The *Café* is scheduled to re-open on *April 26th*. As usual, Daniel, his team and volunteers have concerted plans to get the Garden ready for your visits. There are also some exciting discussions about potentially starting a new trial garden bed, including a crevice garden, near the Head Gardener's office depot. Stay tuned for more news about this development. Of course, we'll also be monitoring the success of last year's planting of the native plants bed, adjacent to the Chapel.

Additionally, we're delighted to have an informational booth at the Calgary Horticultural Society's *Gardeners' Market* on *April 27th* at ATCO Park. Hope to see you there.

Even though winter persists outside here in Calgary ... plans are sprouting for fairer weather ahead.

In response to last year's positive feedback, we will continue to focus again on our dedicated long-term volunteers. Firstly, we're very proud to have such amazing energetic folks on our team. Our "*Volunteer Spotlight*" on page 4 introduces another special person, *Erin*. Secondly, we're also *reaching out to you*, our members, to ask if you or someone you know might be inclined to help out with our initiatives.

There are loads of *volunteer opportunities*, with different levels of commitments, and we'd be pleased to chat with you further about *recruitment* or we can provide job descriptions where needed. For instance, two of the current vacant roles on our Board are for *Social Media & Webmaster* assistance. Both these communication roles don't require gardening mastery and are flexible to fit to the convenience of most schedules. Of course we welcome other diverse interests and skills too. We'd be delighted to hear from you! Looking forward to seeing you soon at the Garden.



Inside this Issue

President's Message	1
From the Archives 1943 Garden Musings	2 - 3
Volunteer Spotlight Coming Events	4 - 5
Our Partners & Gratitude	6

FoRRGS Team

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

From the Archives:

The Albertan 12 Aug. 1943:8

Transcribed by Diane M. Dalkin

“May Remove Reader Home”

If No Buyer Found Cemetery House To Be Razed

MAY REMOVE READER HOME

If No Buyer Found Cemetery House To Be Razed

The house at Union cemetery, occupied by the late W.R. Reader, former parks department superintendent, until the time of his death in January, should be advertised for sale, with the condition that the buyer move it away. This plan, made at a meeting of the parks and playgrounds committee in the city hall Wednesday afternoon, will be submitted to city council.

In the event that there is no buyer, the residence will be demolished, and it is expected the salvage gained would cover the cost.

The building at the main entrance to the cemetery, formerly used as an office, will be converted into a cottage. It is estimated the cost will be about \$1,400. The matter of tenders will be left with the city commissioners.

It was pointed out the office had been moved to the city hall where it was much more convenient. Further, it was necessary to have a caretaker at the cemetery, and possibly the cottage could be occupied by someone in that capacity.

PLAN TO DUPLEX

Discussing a suggestion that the old Reader house be duplexed, members learned that the cost would be about \$1,200.

Ald. Fred Chalk said that in view of the shortage of housing, he believed the building should be duplexed.

In the alternative, it was suggested the top part of the place be closed off, at a cost of about \$50.

However, Chairman Ald. H.R. Chauncey declared: "It's a regular armories to heat." There was a radiant in nearly every room and heating bills averaged \$40 a month.

"Didn't Ald. Mrs. Wilkinson suggest making it into a home for indigents?" Mr. Chalk asked. "They would freeze to

death." Mr. Chauncey commented.

Mayor Andrew Davison noted that in addition to the cost of heating, there was a heavy cost in keeping the road open to the house during winter. Rent from two suites and the cottage would bring in about \$80 a month.

Mr. Chauncey said that if the structure were removed or demolished, the space occupied by it would make a pleasant park. In the alternative, it could be used for very necessary parking space.



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WCS

Present Times:

As a follow-up to the lively 1943 discussions, the original city-owned house was indeed demolished post Mr. Reader's untimely death. It's not surprising that during the time of war, the scarcities and economic challenges precluded saving the this house; no buyers were found. But I am told that some unique features like stained glass windows were sold and salvaged from the original house, perhaps still adorning an existing historical house in the area?

For many decades prior to the 2004-06 restoration project, the site of the currently rebuilt house (which the Café now occupies) was simply a vehicular turnaround, covering any traces of the original Reader house. The site of the former private residence and garden was declared a public park 1943-44 (honoring Mr. Reader's name), with picnic tables added to the Main Lawn.



Prior to restoration, this was the vehicular roundabout post the house's demolition. Northbound views overlooking the Stampede Grounds. The current rebuilt Reader House/Café now resides on this spot.

Luckily, with time and a lot of dedicated efforts, the circumstances have improved substantially for the Garden, now proudly a *National Historical Site*.



Vintage cars parked at the top of the hill, on the vehicular turnaround, before the house was rebuilt, perhaps ~1940-50's based on the car styles.



Garden Musings From the Head Gardener

By Daniel Walker

As I write this brief update, I'm looking at all the fresh snow that came down this past weekend. It seems like this is the year of Spring snow storms, but who can complain about this? We need the moisture.

With Daylight Savings Time starting this Sunday, March 10th, the springing ahead brings to mind that the popping of tulips and buds on trees will quickly be approaching.

New collaborations with multiple botanic gardens are in the works in regards to sharing plant material and exchanging seeds: the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Alberta Botanic Gardens are two new sites that I'm delighted to be partnering with.

Another exciting project coming to the Garden will be continuing the vision of why Reader created the garden and that was to "*trial new plants*". After discussions with the province, my team and I will be transforming the space around the Parks depot at the Garden into a new trial bed where we'll push the limits to see what plants can survive here in the Calgary climate. This will be taking place over the next couple years as we want to do it right and not rush this. Please stay tuned for updates on this project.

In the meanwhile, seed packages are ready for the upcoming Seedy Saturday event, and I'm enjoying the growing seedlings in the greenhouse and awaiting warmer days outdoors.



Hello March

May the early spring
Awaken your soul and
Remind you to
Celebrate a new beginning with the
Hope and liveness it brings.

Volunteer Spotlight!

By Diane M. Dalkin

Once again, in keeping with FoRRGS' focus on our fascinating volunteers that have contributed to all the successes along the way ... *may we introduce you to:*

Erin Davies – Tour Guide/ Garden Ambassador

Question: Your hometown?

I was born in Peterborough, Ontario but grew up in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

Question: When did you arrive in Calgary?

I've lived in Calgary three times, most recently since 2006.



Question: Favorite Book[s]/movie[s]?

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah tells the historical fictional story of German occupied France in WWII from two French sisters' perspectives. It was fascinating to hear the war stories from a women's perspective. One of the main plot lines is about helping allied soldiers shot down over France escape over the Pyrenees mountains into Spain. My paternal grandfather flew for the Royal Canadian Air Force during WWII and was shot down over France. He managed to escape to England via Paris, over the Pyrenees to Spain and down to Gibraltar. Not only was this story very compelling but it holds a lot of significance for my family. I understand that there's a movie being made based on the book and I'm looking forward to it.

Question: Hobbies or non-work-related interests?

Hiking in the mountains, running along the Bow or Elbow Rivers and yoga at Junction 9 in Inglewood.

Question: Career paths/work experience?

I've always worked in the environmental field, largely focused on the air discipline.

Question: Where & what did you study as an adult?

My undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of Alberta and then I moved to Sweden to take a Master of Science degree in International Environmental Science from the

University of Lund. These days I am usually up for any courses on leadership and diversity in the workplace.

Question: Previous/current work experience?

I am currently an Environmental Supervisor at Enbridge, leading a team of air professionals. Previously I worked for a Sustainability consultant and prior to that I worked for Statoil (now Equinor) in regulatory, environment and climate roles.

Question: Professional affiliations or publications?

I am a registered Professional Engineer with APEGA.

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

I am a volunteer tour guide and started volunteering in the fall of 2017 right before my second child was born.

Question: Best thing[s] about RRG?

I love the stone walkways and the how historically accurate the garden has been restored and continues to be cared for. Most of all I love how the garden changes from week to week, it is a different experience every time you visit!

Question: Most challenging thing about RRG?

Reacquainting myself with the plants in the spring! I'm also still a beginner at learning all the Latin names of the plants.

Question: What have you discovered at RRG, learnings, surprises, inspirations, etc.?

I'm inspired all the time by different microclimates, seasons, and cycles in the garden. It encourages me to try different plants in our backyard garden.

Question: What would you like the public to know about this unique place?

Come visit and enjoy this beautiful, historic, and peaceful garden. If you're not already a member please join and see you at the Annual Plant Sale and Garden Stroll! Did you know that FORRGS offers tours to the public and organized groups? We've given tours to a variety of groups including seniors and retirees, family reunions, historical and horticultural groups.

Question: Must-see highlight[s] onsite?

Check out the grape vines on the cemetery side of Nana's Garden, I saw them for the first-time last summer!

Question: Other things you'd like to share with us?

William Roland Reader left quite a legacy for the citizens of Calgary, and we are so lucky that the current and former FORRGS members and City staff work hard to maintain and improve the garden's historical accuracy.





Seedy Saturday will be happening on Saturday, March 23, 2024 from 10am to 3pm at Bowness Community Association

(7904 43 Ave NW, Calgary). This is a free, drop-in event.

Calgary Seedy Saturday is keeping the skill of growing from seed to seed alive in Calgary. As large commercial seed companies consolidate and only offer more hybrids and patented varieties, we are increasingly losing the regionally adapted collections that have developed in our unique prairie climate.

Calgary Seedy Saturday is part of the worldwide Seedy Saturday/Sunday events that celebrate open-pollinated seeds.

You can reach them at:

calgaryseedysaturday@gmail.com,

or visit their Facebook page.

**Please Consider
Renewing Your
FoRRGS Membership**

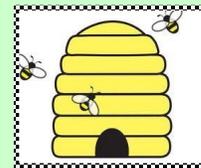
A three-year option offers savings and less annual work.

Plus it can be done Online for your convenience.

It's super easy, really!

See Our Website

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



If you have any concerns

Please email us at info@ReaderRock.com

Thank-You!



April 27, 2024 - 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

At the Commons at ATCO Park

5302 Forand Street SW

Presented by Greengate Garden Centre



Mark Your Calendars!

Join us this 2024 Season:

April 26 - Reader's Garden Café re-opens

May 4 - Saturday – FoRRGS AGM

May 26 - Sunday – FoRRGS Plant Sale & Stroll

Sept 7 - Saturday – FoRRGS Volunteer Appreciation

Details to follow closer to the dates.

www.ReaderRock.com





37 Silver Springs Dr. NW
www.bgss.ca

Have Some Extra Time ? ...
Looking For Learning Opportunities? ...
Volunteers Always Welcomed!
Please Contact us at
Info@ReaderRock.com and we'll fill you
in on the details.

Thanks a bunch ! 🌸



GARDEN RETREAT
6510 1a Street SW
Calgary, AB

Website: www.gardenretreat.ca
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Discounts available to FoRRGS members

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Re-Opening April 26, 2024 for the Season.

Call 403-234-0065 or see the website: www.readersgardencafe.ca
Discounts available to FoRRGS members

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

Mark Your Calendars
CRAGS Annual Plant Sale:
Saturday, **June 1, 2024**
From Noon until 4:00 PM
Lakeview Community Association grounds

See their website for more up-to-date
monthly happenings

www.crag.ca/events

Lakeview Community
Association Hall
6110 - 34 Street SW