

Friends of Reader Rock Garden Society



Summer Newsletter

2025 Issue 2

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Calgary Made History with First Green Flag Awards in Canada

By: Diane M. Dalkin



A new season is here; it “officially” just arrived. Friday, June 20, 2025, marks the first astronomical day of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. It is also known as the Summer Solstice or June Solstice and the longest day of the year. Yet, here at Reader Rock Garden so much has already happened; it’s been a busy Spring.

Firstly, you may have heard that ***Calgary made history with first Green Flag Awards in Canada!***

On June 10, 2025, **Reader Rock Garden**, along with **Confederation Park**, received the **Green Flag Award**. This prestigious international award offers many bragging rights in itself, but to be the *first in Canada to receive it...* well, ...it’s understandable that we’re beaming with pride for this accomplishment! Ironically, Calgary has some of the most challenging growing conditions in the country. So, it is well-earned indeed! The Green Flag Award is the recognized international standard for parks and green spaces. It is a benchmark against which the quality of “*freely accessible public parks and green spaces*” can be measured and demonstrates that not only is the park / green space environmentally sound, but it is well-used, well-managed and held in high regard.

The City Parks staff and FoRRGS spent the entire morning with the three judges from the UK, Seattle, and California answering questions, touring the Garden, and showcasing its beauty, legacy, and maintenance operations/plans. *“Successful sites show that they manage a quality space with a clear idea of what they are trying to achieve, why, and who they seek to serve. Award applicants are judged against 27 different criteria and must submit their active management plan, showing that they understand: the users, the site, and the management”*.

Even as early as 1914, Mr. Reader, as Parks Superintendent was ahead of his time and noted that: *“A progressive park extension program is inseparably associated with public welfare. It is not nowadays a question whether parks can be afforded, but rather whether we can afford not to have them.”* He strongly advocated that the public enjoy their parks: *“Walk, sit, play, socialize, improve quality of life, refresh, explore leisure, nature, respite from urban lifestyle... parks offer... seeds of promise and health”*.

Although Reader Rock Garden only became a public park in 1943 upon Mr. Reader's death, he had set the bar high for this site, creating a “living classroom” exploring the horticultural possibilities and potential in Calgary. After almost three decades of transforming this once barren hillside into a lush oasis, it comes as no surprise that this area was named in his honor, with appreciation of all his efforts. And, so, we continue his legacy in his vision.

In the same vein as Mr. Reader's progressive thinking, this Award also acknowledges that, *“Nowadays, across the world, the importance of equal access to green and other open spaces has been highlighted in relation to healthy living, especially the far-reaching impacts of stress, mental health and obesity”*.

Reader Rock Garden, as a Cultural Landscape and National Historic Site further checks off the boxes for high standards in light of *“The Green Flag Award sets out to recognize, understand and promote national heritage in biodiversity, landscapes and buildings in all settings – appreciating and understanding history and its related multicultural and social bonds”*.

So many people had a hand in this successful achievement: of course - the Calgary Parks staff, our dedicated team of volunteers, our horticultural affiliates, community supporters, FoRRGS members, business associates, and the Reader Family descendants.

Betty-Rose Harrington, Mr. Reader's grand-daughter was *"tickled pink, with a full heart and honored that her Grand-Dad's legacy is being kept alive and flourishing because of everyone's efforts"*!

Mr. Reader's great-grandson, David Peacock, also expressed, on behalf of the entire family, as being *"eternally indebted to the caring team at the Garden. This news warms my heart and brings tears to my eyes."*

All Calgarians should share in this joyous award. No doubt Mr. Reader would have approved too!

See this link for more details: <https://www.greenflagaward.org/news/calgary-makes-history-with-first-green-flag-awards-in-canada/>

FoRRGS Annual Plant Sale – Another Resounding Success

By Diane M. Dalkin



After months of planning and preparations in the greenhouse, everyone's efforts culminated in record sales on June 8th. Our plant sale was once again a huge hit! Besides the increased revenue for our fundraising efforts, more importantly we had far more volunteers offering to help out than positions to fill for the event. *People-*

power makes things happen! Thank-you to ALL the volunteers, FoRRGS members and Reader's Garden Cafe for supporting this important annual event.

Head Gardener Ben did the lion's share of plant preps, offering a huge diversity of plant varieties, so he and his team definitely deserve to take a bow. Impressive work, Ben, on your first plant sale!

The extensive plant sale inventory was welcomed by the attending plant collectors. However, we will try to have the coveted Meconopsis [aka Himalayan Blue Poppy] next year. Still, happy gardeners left with smiles and great plant specimens to take home.



Welcome to the FoRRGS Team!

By Diane M. Dalkin

We are so fortunate to have such *fabulous individuals* joining us in promoting Reader Rock Garden and its rich historical and horticultural presence. It is the perfect opportunity to welcome these keen new Board members:

- *Janis Isaman* is our new *Social Media Director*. In just a matter of weeks, Janis has raised FoRRGS' online presence by leaps and bounds! It is great to keep up with technology and connect with like-minded lovers of nature, history, and the community.
- *Lorna Hightower* is our new *Webmaster*. Although her work is usually in the background, it is still especially important to have our website operating effectively. We're looking forward to Lorna's insights and expertise.

Upcoming Events

- FoRRGS Tour Guides offer *monthly garden tours*; see [Eventbrite](#) for more details about upcoming tours.
- *Private garden tours* are also available upon request and a financial donation of your choosing. Email us to chat further: info@ReaderRock.com
- We're participating in *Historic Calgary Week* July 25 – August 4, 2025. See their website for all the interesting features. Details coming soon at: <https://www.chinookhistory.ca/historic-calgary-week>

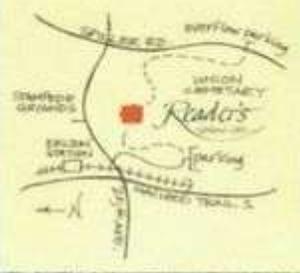
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Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS)



Hybrid Monthly Meetings hosted 2nd Thursday of each month

Online via Zoom, or in-person at:

Lakeview Community Association Hall

6110 34th Street SW

[Visit CRAGS website for upcoming events](#)

FoRRGS Team

President - Diane Dalkin

Vice-President - Colleen McCracken

Treasurer - Victoria Arling

Membership - Lena Cordell

Secretary - *Vacant*

Directors - Susan Brims, Marcy Carlson, Rosemary Griebel, Sue Gryzenhout,

Magdalena Muir, John Percic

Social Media - Janis Isaman

Webmaster - Lorna Hightower

Interested in volunteering with FoRRGS?

Send us an email at info@readerrock.com or visit our website to learn more!

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