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Friends of Reader Rock Garden Society



Spring Newsletter

2026 Issue 1

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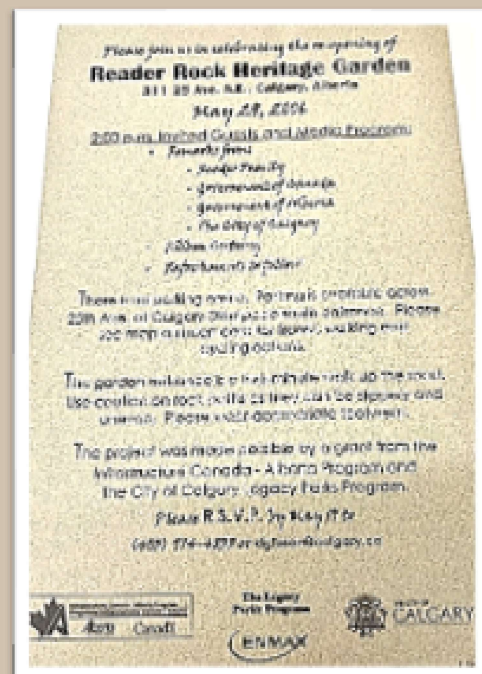
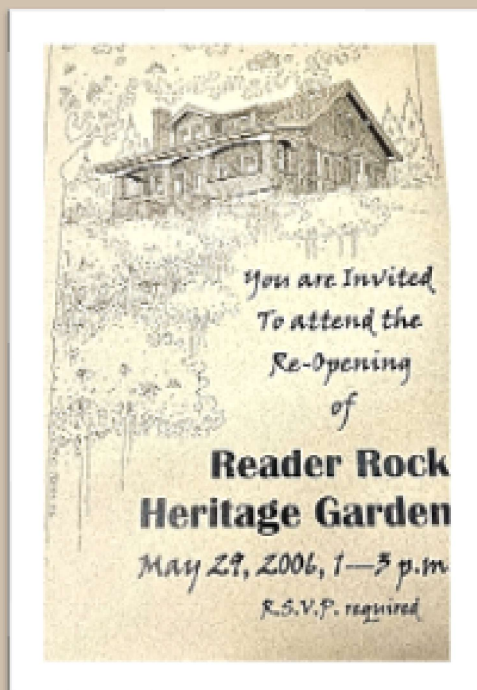
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President's Message

By: Diane M. Dalkin

Hello 2026, the Year of the Fire Horse, which is expected to be full of dynamic energy. Here's hoping it will prove to be positive, vibrant and adventurous! No doubt the world's political instability and threat to peace make for challenging times. Yet we must also focus on "the good" to bring us all together and be thankful. Celebrating a milestone is a promising start.

It has been 20 years since the Grand Re-Opening of the Garden, following the major renovations/restorations. I was honored to be invited to this memorable event on May 29, 2006, due to my early volunteering onsite. It was totally worth taking the afternoon off work to attend the festivities, meet some of Mr. Reader's family and applaud the fruition of this fabulous accomplishment! That day's pride was palpable among attendees, with unmistakable smiles beaming from everyone.





- In 2006, the Garden reopened to the public!
- Official ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by Reader's relatives, who provided personalized recollections and reflections of the Garden
- Former Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier & Bill Peacock (late).

And since then, during these past 20 years, the Garden has continued to mature and thrive. Last year's international Green Flag Award bestowed another high honor to the Garden, first in Canada, no less. This further confirmed the rightful place of this unique **Cultural Landscape** and **National Historic Site**.



Our recent research over winter was productive. Once again, new things came to view in our treasure hunt. The following two historical snippets included in "From The Archives" dated 1911 & 1942, offer some amusing and insightful perspectives. Furthermore, we also came across a very interesting and eloquent 1990 article in the Landscape Architectural Review. The author, Kathleen M. McNally, acknowledged that the story of the Reader Rock Garden should probably begin with "*Once upon a time ... because the creation of this garden was nothing short of miraculous, and the people who remember it during its height have referred to it as a magical and enchanted place*". I think this spirit of the Garden remains today and the miracle continues to bloom due to the small army of green-hearted enthusiasts dedicated to its preservation. Mr. Reader's legacy lives on as a result of the tremendous efforts from determined FoRRGS founding members, the City Parks' team, the Head Gardeners, FoRRGS Volunteers, Affiliates, and other community & corporate supporters. These champions energized the resurgence of this important place.

Now, at the start of 2026, we are hopeful and look forward to another fruitful season!



Calgary Seedy Saturday

Happening on Saturday, March 21, 2026, 10am to 3pm at
Bowness Community Association (7904 - 43 Ave NW, Calgary AB T3B 4P9).

This is a free, drop-in event.

See the website for more details: calgaryseedysaturday.ca

FoRRGS will have seeds from Reader Rock Garden; come by & say "hello"!

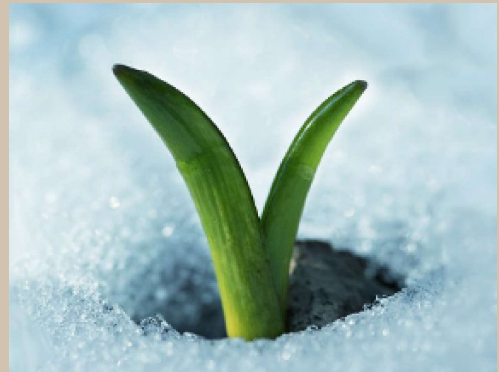


SPRING WIND

When the wind whips up
and the sun goes down,
I feel the chill
in my coat of down.

It's cold! It's warm!
But here's the thing.
It's what we have
when it's turning spring.

© Denise Rodgers ClassroomPoems.com



"Despite the forecast, live like it's spring."

- Lily Pulitzer



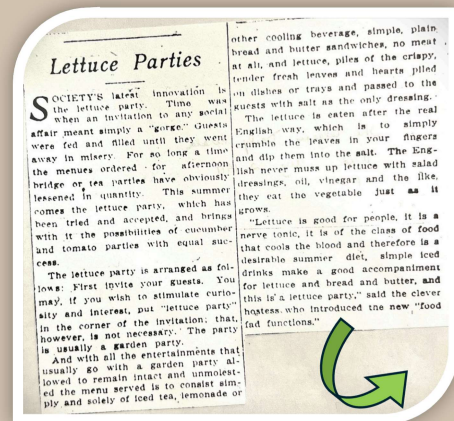
From the Archives: Lettuce Parties

Transcribed by Diane M. Dalkin

*Amusing Curiosity from a 1911 Article
in the Herald:*

Society's latest innovation is the lettuce party. Time was when an invitation to any social affair meant simply a "gorge". Guests were fed and filled until they went away in misery.

For so long a time the menus ordered for afternoon bridge or tea parties have obviously



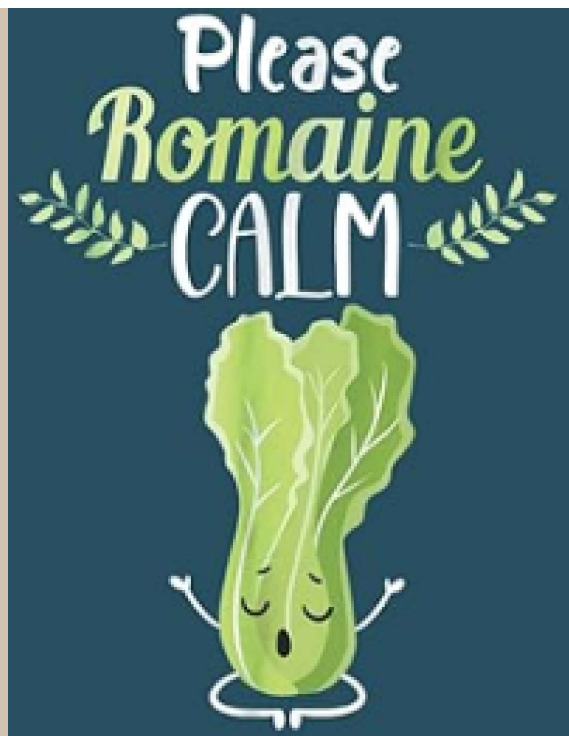
lessened in quantity. This summer comes the lettuce party, which has been tried and accepted, and brings with it the possibilities of cucumber and tomato parties with equal success.

The lettuce party is arranged as follows: First invite your guests. You may, if you wish to stimulate curiosity and interest, put "lettuce party" in the corner of the invitation; that, however, is not necessary. The party is usually a garden party.

And with all the entertainments that usually go with a garden party allowed to remain intact and unmolested the menu served is to consist simply and solely of iced tea, lemonade or other cooling beverages, simple plain bread and butter sandwiches, no meat at all, and lettuce, piles of the crispy, tender fresh leaves and hearts piled on dishes or trays and passed to the guests with salt as the only dressing.

The lettuce is eaten after the real English way, which is to simply crumble the leaves in your fingers and dip them into the salt. The English never muss up lettuce with salad dressings, oil, vinegar and the like, they eat the vegetable just as it grows.

Lettuce is good for people, it is a nerve tonic, it is of the class of food that cools the blood and therefore is a desirable summer diet, simple iced drinks make a good accompaniment for lettuce and bread and butter, and this is a "lettuce party", said the clever hostess who introduced the new "food fad functions."



From the Archives: Letters to the Editor, April 2, 1942

Transcribed by Diane M. Dalkin

(Mr. Reader seemed to be ahead of his time, largely being self-taught, researching alternative sources of plant products, in this case hypoallergenic latex.)

Dandelion Can Provide Rubber

Editor, the Herald:—

I recently sent you a copy of an article appearing in an Old Country paper dealing with the rubber situation. I now supplement this with another from the same source. It would appear that at last the much-maligned dandelion is coming into its own.

During the year 1935 the United States imported 600,476 "long tons" of raw rubber, and in 1939 produced 4,000 tons of synthetic rubber. Now that several of the usual sources of supply are closed, as a result of war conditions, other sources are being explored. Dr. Paul J. Kolachov, of Messrs. J. E. Seagram & Sons, Louisville, has been conducting experiments, and in his recently published "American Rubber for American Farms" he deals at length with the Hevea Rubber industry, but also points out that a certain form of the Dandelion—the Chinese Kok-saghyz—produces roots that yield six to twelve percent of latex. A crop of between 4,500 and 5,500 pounds per acre gives a yield of about two hundred pounds of crude rubber.

The value of Guayule (*Parthenium argentatum*), a Mexican shrub, was demonstrated so long ago as 1876, and a German concern was established in 1902 to develop it. In 1905-1909, thirty million dollars was spent on the industry, but the largest amount of Guayule rubber produced does not appear to have exceeded 10 thousand tons, and in 1939 less than two thousand tons was exported from Mexico. One company has eight thousand acres under Guayule cultivation, and experiments in California prove that about three hundred pounds of Guayule rubber per acre may be produced.

WM. R. READER,
Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Calgary.

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Wm. R. Reader – *Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Calgary*

Looking forward to 2026: NARGS AGM



The Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS) is excited to announce we will be hosting the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) Conference and AGM on June 25-28, 2026. Activities will include a variety of excellent speakers, guided hikes in the Kananaskis valley to view native alpine, tours of CRAGS members' gardens, visits to public gardens with alpine, and a plant sale. NARGS membership is a prerequisite of attending (www.nargs.org/join).

Speakers include Vojtěch Holubec (Czech Republic), Jay Akerley (Kamloops, BC), Todd Boland (St. John's, Newfoundland), John Noad (Calgary), and Stephanie Ferguson (Calgary).

Full details are on the CRAGS website (www.crag.ca/high_and_dry).

Registration opens on February 2nd, 2026 (at 8:00 a.m. MST). Spaces are limited.



One of the hikes takes us to this alpine meadow:



©2022 Boyd Nave

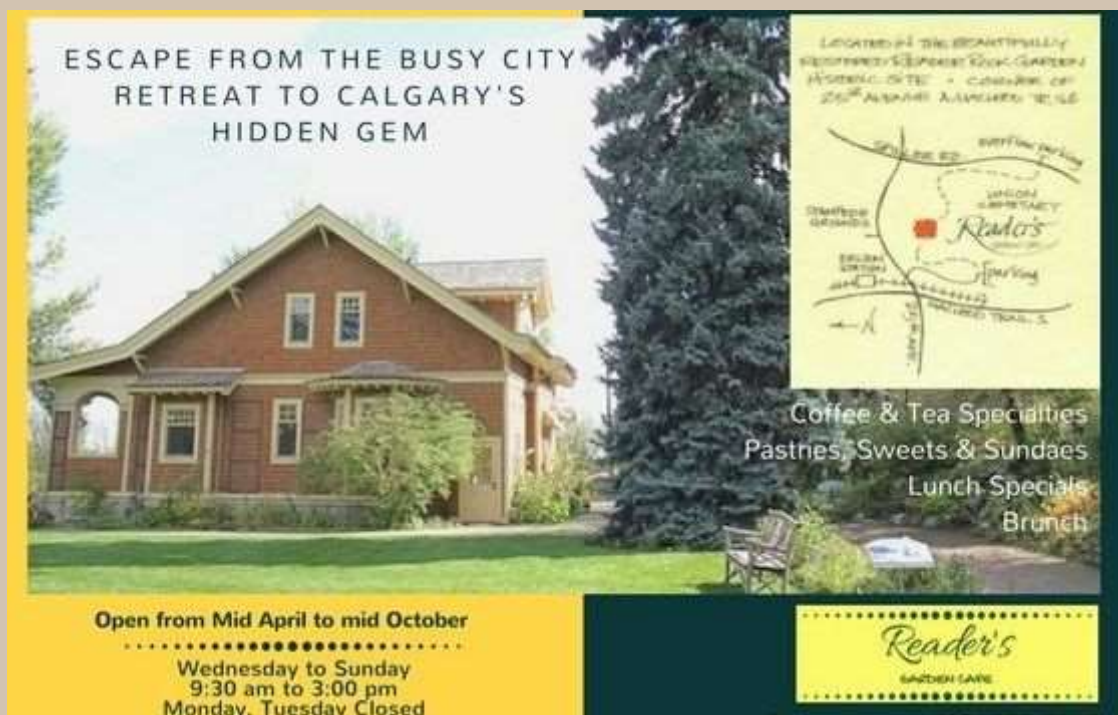
A CRAGS member's impressive garden:



©2024 Carol Huggler

Thanks to our corporate supporters!

Reader's Garden Cafe



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

LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFULLY
RESTORED SEASIDE ROCK GARDENS
HISTORIC SITE - CORNER OF
25th AVE AND KENNEDY RD

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

Reader's
GARDEN CAFE

Reader's Garden Cafe opens on May 1, 2026!
10% discount available for FoRRGS members.

[Visit Reader's Garden Cafe website](#)



ALCLA Native Plants

Specializing in Alberta native plant
production and genetics.

Discounts available for FoRRGS members.

Visits are by appointment only.

Located in Carstairs, Alberta.

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Garden Retreat

Discounts available for FoRRGS members

[Visit Garden Retreat website](#)

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 - Magdalena Muir (*acting*)

Directors - Susan Brims, Marcy Carlson, Rosemary Griebel, Sue Gryzenhout, Vita Leung,
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!

Send us an email

Visit our website



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