

THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association
BARAGA, Volume 33, Number 3, Sept 2014

Progress on Community Fruit Trees

- Ramiro Coto



A committee has formed to plan out putting fruit trees in common areas. A couple of the members are doing an inventory on the number and type of fruit trees we already have in the

common areas of the gardens. In the next few weeks we will create a maintenance plan for them.

We have also created a list of possible types of fruit trees that will do well in the area. The list includes: apple, apricot, asian pear, blueberry, crab-apple, cranberry/lingonberry, honey berry, nectarine, peach (frost only), plum and quince(cydonia). Espaliered trees are ideal along the bee meadow fence. A variety of trees is more likely to resist pests and provides better selection to members and the food bank.

Pears were left off the list due to the prevalence of pear trellis rust. Cherries were also left off due to invasive root systems. Grapes and kiwis, while very successful on site, require a support structure and high maintenance.

Acquisition of new trees may be by donation or by donation to a specific goal fund. Should members wish to donate a particular tree, it should conform to size and placement standards and be free of pests and diseases. Alternatively, members may contribute to the fund which will be used to purchase trees at the best possible price. We will discuss plans to acquire trees at the next Directors' Meeting.

Members that wish to donate trees can do so starting this fall.

Summer Student Leaves Early

Our summer student left his job on July 29 and we were unable to replace him for the remainder of the term.

Our summer student started May 14. He was working 35 hours a week at \$10.25 per hour. Midway through the season he started taking other part time jobs and he left on July 29. Don Hatch promptly posted the open position and had an applicant, but the potential replacement student didn't show up for the interview.

At the beginning of the year, BARAGA applied for a grant from the Canada Summer Jobs Program for two people for 16 weeks. We received a grant for one person for 10 weeks (350 hours at \$10.25 per hour). Abdul Majid has expressed some concern that since we only used 267 hours of the grant, we may receive only 267 hours next year.

Next year the directors will post the position earlier in the season to get a better selection of candidates.

The Chips are Back!



Director Ramiro Coto has brought back the chips! He went back to the City of Burnaby to clarify what was allowable and it turns out that their ban is only on cedar chips. (Previously we thought all softwood chips were forbidden.)

Chips are delivered to the corner of the west parking lot.

Extra Work Party Added

An extra Work Party on October 11 has been added to the schedule.

BARAGA Directors Terminate Membership of Person Who Took Soil

This month, after much discussion, the BARAGA directors delivered a plot termination letter to the person who was taking BARAGA soil from the bee meadow.

The story began last April, when members reported seeing someone taking soil from the bee meadow. BARAGA paid for the soil last year. Posters were put up to report the problem and a mail-out was done.

In June, two directors observed a person loading soil from the bee meadow into buckets and apparently putting them into his nearby truck. When the person was questioned, he addressed the two directors using rude language.

All the directors discussed the event and the member's response by e-mail and at the next board meeting. At the board meeting, the directors voted to terminate the member, for violating two of the Handbook rules: theft and harassment. The termination letter, which was sent in late June, stated that the member had two weeks to appeal the decision.

In late July the board received a letter from the member requesting an appeal. The appeal date was set for early August. One of the directors phoned the member and was treated with anger and hostility (although it was reported that the member later apologized). Around this time there were also reports that the member was spreading rumors about another BARAGA member.

The board heard the member's appeal on August 10 and afterward reviewed the events and the members explanation. Several board members felt that the member had not given a sincere apology. After much discussion, the board voted narrowly to allow the member to keep his plot on a probationary basis. The board attached two conditions: first, the member must do a specified community service project as restitution and second, he must apologize to the member he had spread rumors about. About a week after the appeal, letters stating the conditions of continued membership were left on the member's plot and e-mailed to him. The member was given one week to respond.

Ten days after the letters were delivered, the directors were told that the member had been ill for about a week.

The next board meeting was a week later on September 2. Since no response had been received, directors voted to finalize termination of the person's membership.

Editorial- Community Service Hours

- *Andrea Tylczak*

In a recent News Flash there was a reminder about the mandatory six hours of community service. I have heard through the grapevine that came as an unpleasant surprise to some people.

We (and I mean all the membership, not just the directors) voted to make six hours of community service mandatory at the last AGM. The rule change was reported on pages 1 and 7 of the March Seedling. It is also in the updated Handbook that was posted on the web in March or so. Community service was talked about in the June Seedling and the June 18 News Flash.

If you're not happy with the rule change, well, that would be a good reason to and come to the AGMs and vote. I was there; personally, I voted against this particular rule change. But BARAGA is a member-run organization and we go with the majority vote, so once the majority votes for something, it applies to everyone.

If you don't like the rule, you can certainly come to the next AGM, make a motion to change the rule again, and let the members vote on it. In fact, you can come to the AGM and make a motion to change any rule and let the members vote on it.

Another alternative would be to find a different community garden association with rules that you like better. No one is holding a gun to your head and saying that you have to remain a member of BARAGA. We have over 100 people on the waiting list who would be happy to have your plot and to follow BARAGA's rules.

Sorry if this sound harsh, but everyone agreed to follow the BARAGA rules when they signed their membership form. The three alternatives are to find a way to comply with the rules, change the rules, or leave. Ignoring the rules is not an option.

Editorial - Community Composting*- Abdul Majid*

The primary need for a common compost pile is due to the large amount of green waste produced at BARAGA and then discarded into the garbage bins for the city to pick up.

The same green waste in a common compost pile can generate enough heat, if the compost pile is large enough, to neutralize all pathogens and even hardened weeds and seeds, even in the winter months. The heat generated is enough to make good compost and also deter vermin infestation found on and around smaller compost piles on individual plots, especially in the cooler months.

So far two ideas are proposed:

1. A large composting area designated near the dumpsters that can be worked using our tractor.
2. Several (4-6) composting plots evenly distributed throughout the gardens with assigned plots contributing to the compost pile.

They both have merit from an environmental standpoint.

- They both reduce waste thrown in the dumpster which we have started getting billed for this year, thus saving us money.
- They reduce the amount of soil and organic matter loss from the gardens.
- They increase the amount of soil amendments available for use at BARAGA.
- They increase the amount of social interaction and interdependence at the gardens, leading to a stronger and friendlier community.
- They encourage a sense of working together and sharing the finished product for the whole community.

Using one large designated composting area has the benefit of being away from naysayers and it can be easily worked using available equipment like the tractor to turn over and aerate the compost from time to time.

The downside is that it is far away from the members on the eastern part of the gardens. They would have to cart all their compostables all the way to the west gate. Also, since depositing material would be anonymous, some members might use the larger compost pile as a dumping ground for all sorts of non compostable materials and trash.

Using several smaller composting areas favours the participants who are willing to control the inflow of compostable plant matter from their assigned neighbourhood and take ownership of the finished product.

It also helps keep the waste plant material in the same locality of the garden where it is produced.

The downside is that the participants may not be able to use the tractor due to tight space restrictions between the plots and may have to turn the heap manually to aerate.

Finally I would like to say that this is a community project. If the community support for the project is strong, we will go ahead and it will be successful. We will be a better community garden for it.

Editorial - Be WaterSmart!*-Heather Ewasew*

One of the single largest expenses at BARAGA is our water bill. In 2013 it was over \$10,000. This year it will be higher due to the unusually dry and warm summer. As of the end of July the bill was already at \$10,500!

Inexperienced gardeners, and even some experience gardeners, often simply look at the soil and if it looks dry they pull out the hose to water.

Before you bring out the hose first test the soil by sticking your hand in and feeling below the top layer. It may look dry on the surface after a sunny or windy day but an inch or so below the surface there is often plenty of moisture. Too much moisture is detrimental to plant health and can rot the seeds that you so carefully sowed.

Some members are using oscillating sprinklers or spraying water into the air above their plants. This wastes water because half it evaporates before it gets to the plants. Spraying water on the foliage can also invite fungal diseases. Ditch the sprinkler and use a watering wand or hose nozzle. Focus the water stream where there are seeds, seedlings or mature plants.

Plants that are watered shallowly and often will not develop a deep root system and won't be as vigorous as those that receive fewer but deeper waterings.

And mulch, mulch, mulch! Once your plants are established apply a thick layer of mulch taking care

to leave some space in between the mulch and the plant stems. Apply the mulch after the area is weeded and the soil is moistened. The mulch will help prevent evaporation and will feed the soil as it breaks down. It will also help to suppress those dreaded weeds. Grass clippings make excellent mulch and are full of nitrogen. If you don't have access to grass clippings collect bags of leaves in the fall and spread them out over your empty garden beds.

Collect rain water in a barrel or large plastic garbage can. The water from barrels is warmer than water from the hose (better for seedlings) and it doesn't contain any chlorine. Just remember to take steps to prevent the barrel from becoming a mosquito breeding ground.

If you are going without bed borders and are gardening with raised soil rows, don't dig the furrows too deep. If you have furrows that are spaced too wide apart or too deep the moisture will never reach the roots of the plants. Most vegetable plants with well-developed root systems have roots that are within 6" of the soil surface.

Another source of water waste is leaky or dripping faucets and hoses. Keep your hose in good repair and report any leaking taps so they can be repaired.

Handbook Changes

BARAGA directors approved two corrections to the Handbook at the September 2 Directors' Meeting. The directors agreed that the existing wordings did not accurately reflect the voting members' intent at the time the Handbook changes were made and they were concerned that some members might take advantage of accidental loopholes in the wording. The changes are indicated by underlines.

1.1 3.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members are responsible for:

- Informing the Directors immediately in writing of a change in name, address, phone number, e-mail address or if they wish to give up the plot.
- Paying annual membership fees before the due date.
- Paying plot rental fees before the due date.

- Paying a clean-up deposit when first getting a plot. (see see 3.9 Plot Cleanup Deposit Fee below)
- Following BARAGA's operating policies, as defined in BARAGA's constitution and bylaws, The BARAGA Handbook, and the Society Act of British Columbia.
- Participating in a minimum of six hours per year of mandatory work to help administer and maintain the gardens.
- Fulfilling plot maintenance requirements (see see CHAPTER 5 - Plot Maintenance).

1.1.1 5.6.1 Structures

Structures must comply with the following:

- All greenhouses, sheds, and other structures are to be constructed using materials other than glass and no part of the structure is to be of a permanent nature, in other words, no poured concrete material and other material that cannot be removed if necessary.
- No higher than seven feet from the normal pathway elevation and that these structures must be of such a size and in such a location that they cast no shadow on a neighbouring plot in the months of March through October.
- A greenhouse no larger than 10 square meters or 107.5 square feet may be constructed.
- A shed no larger than 4.6 square meters or 50 square feet may be constructed.
- Safe and in good repair and no part of any structure including the roof overhang may be built closer than 6 inches from the general plot border.

Community Food Angels Update

- Ann Talbot

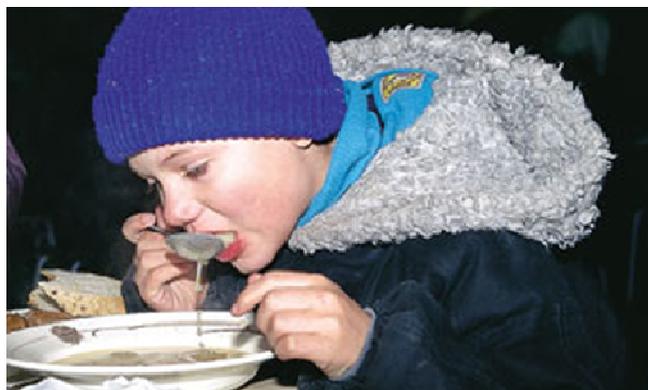
BARAGA is proud to support the Food Bank's Community Food Angels program with donations from our gardeners. Every Monday morning, the Food Angels come to pick up produce from the donation box in the BARAGA parking lot. So far, the results have been quite good - lots of healthy vegetables such as kale, swiss chard, potatoes, cucumbers and most recently beets and tomatoes from the educational plot.



Sean McCann, an SFU graduate student, harvests beets from the educational plot to donate to Food Runners

We plan to continue the pick-ups through the fall season, so please remember to donate on Sunday nights or Monday mornings. Here are some reminders of why we are supporting this program:

- In April of 1997, the Provincial Government unanimously passed Bill 10, the Food Donor Encouragement Act. The act encourages organizations to make donations of perishable food and provides a valuable source of nutrition to recipients.



Because of privacy concerns, the Seedling Editor was unable to get any photos of the actual soup kitchens where our produce is distributed. Hopefully these photos will give you the idea.



- Community Angel Food Runners staff inspect food both at the time of pick-up and again before it is delivered to agencies. Quality food is delivered to agencies on the same day it is collected.
- The program saves over 870,000 pounds of food a year which would otherwise be wasted. Instead 1.25 million meals are provided for people in need.

BARAGA Shared Tools

BARAGA has some shared tools such as a weed wacker and a rototiller that members can borrow for up to an hour. However, the tools haven't been much available this summer because there is usually no one with a key around to loan them out.

This is a good volunteer opportunity for someone who is looking for lighter tasks. We need volunteers to be around the garden at designated times to loan out tools and we need someone to organize and schedule the times.

The Buzz on BARAGA Bees

- Eric Crosby and Andrea Tylczak

Q- How many active hives do we have now? Have we divided any hives this summer?

A - We have 14 active hives. Two are top bar hives. (A top-bar hive is a different style of hive that produces less honey but is said to be more natural for the bees.) We divided hives in spring and summer.

Q- Are the bees healthy?

A- There is minor chalk brood in a few colonies. (Chalk brood is a fungal disease that affects

developing bee larvae.) The colonies should survive OK. We have one queen that is not as healthy as she could be.

Q - How much honey was extracted and sold at the picnic?

A- About 35-500 ml containers were sold at the picnic

Q- Do you expect another honey gathering this year?

A-No, the rest of the honey is for the bees, to see them through the winter.



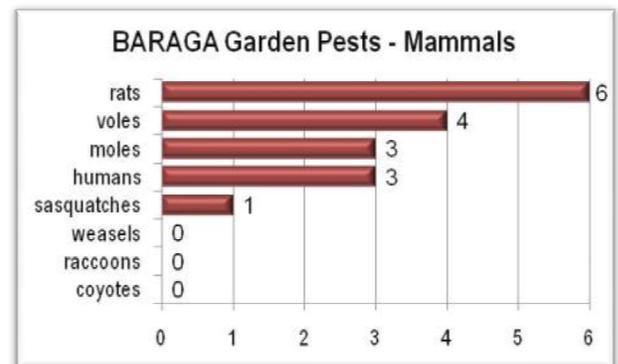
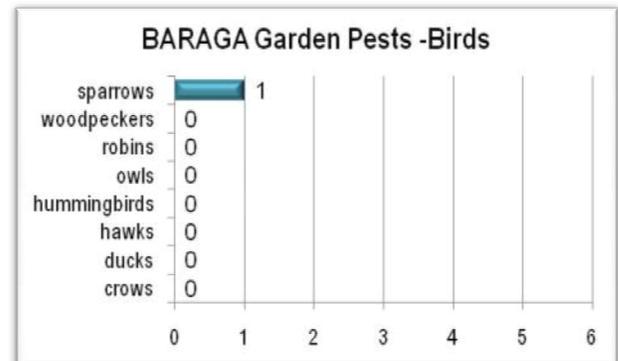
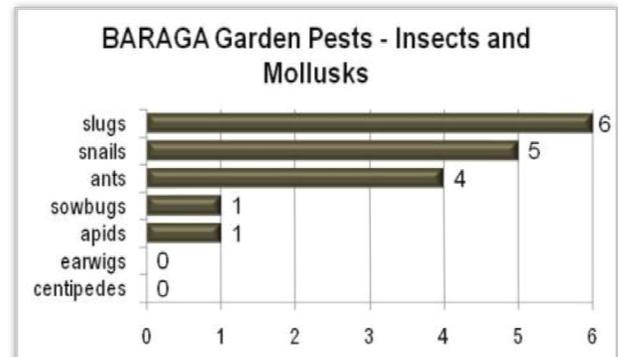
Q- How late in the year do you expect the bees to be active?

A- The bees can be active right up into early December collecting pollen and water.

Q - What do the bees do in the winter? Do they hibernate?

A - No. In the dark cold months the bees cluster tightly together and shiver to create enough heat in their torpid state to stay alive and keep the queen warm. Generally she does not lay eggs over about 2 months, but starts again in late January. The bees can begin to collect pollen and water in late January in Vancouver off things like hazel nuts.

The main concern for bee health over winter is just whether they will survive or not. Going into winter, the colony should have a large population of young bees and have enough stored food (honey and pollen). An average colony of bees in Canada will consume about 60 - 80 lb (27-36 kg) of honey over the winter.



Don't have access to a computer? You can always respond to a BARAGA survey by phone or postal mail!

Results of Garden Pests Survey

In August, BARAGA directors surveyed members about what garden pests were causing them trouble. Directors wanted to find out what pests were the biggest problems and to plot out where the problems were in the garden so action could be planned.

Only eight members responded to the survey, which was not enough to be able to locate the problem areas.

Survey results are shown in the plots below.

BARAGA Annual Picnic

The BARAGA picnic was held on August 9. Congratulations to all contest winners!

Best Plots - 1st Ruzia Peric, 2nd Dullss Kleamyck
Vegetables - 1st Olga Chamgoucova, 2nd Doug O-Keefe

Fruit - 1st Jonathan Candy, 2nd Doreen Harol

Flowers - 1st Cecilia Gariup, 2nd Cathy Hickson

Presentation - 1st Anna Nikoldenko, 2nd Jon Park

BARAGA Seedling

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Most Unusual - 1st Walter Porcellato, 2nd Jean Webster

Canning/Baking - 1st Bev Lawes, 2nd EleniHarvalias

Thank you to Larry Johnson and volunteers for organizing the picnic. And thank you to Chris Mann for supplying the photos.



Community Composting

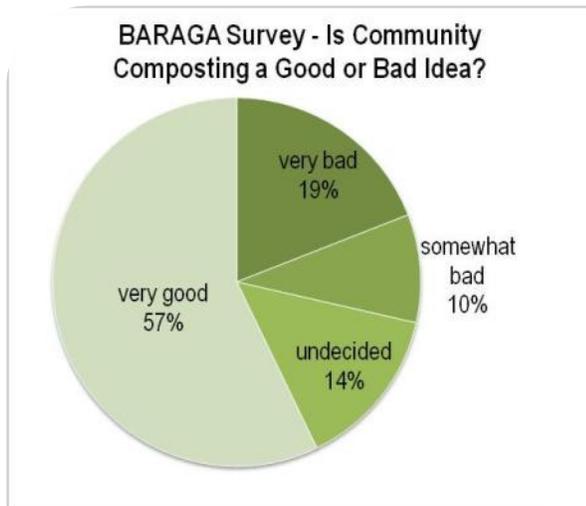
BARAGA directors are discussing establishing community composting plots to reduce the amount of green waste put in our dumpsters. Hot composting would be practiced on the plots.

Background - Paragraph 5.2 of the Handbook states, "In the interest of maintaining healthy garden soil and minimizing off-site waste, waste plant material from each garden plot should be put back into the soil of the plot.... A small amount of garbage put into the BARAGA dumpster is acceptable, such as diseased plant matter and noxious/aggressive weeds such as horsetail and morning glory..." Nonetheless, members continue to dump full wheelbarrow loads of healthy plant matter in the dumpsters. The reason often given is that the member doesn't have room to compost on his or her plot.

Green waste is actually banned from being mixed into regular garbage in Metro Vancouver. If a load contains green waste, there is a 50% surcharge on the dumping fee. (Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Bylaw No. 281, 2013)

No final decision has been made about whether to establish community composting areas or where those areas might be.

Survey Results - Twenty-three members responded to the electronic survey. There were no responses by phone or postal mail. The majority of members who responded thought community composting was a good idea.



Members' concerns included the following:

- Movement of fire ants and other pests
- Lazy gardeners dumping rubbish

- Attracting rats and other pests
- Who would maintain it

Members also made positive comments:

- Saves garden waste out of dumpsters
- Stops dumping of green waste
- Educate gardeners on how to compost
- Put nutrients back into BARAGA soil

Hot vs Cold Composting - The composting most BARAGA gardeners do on their plots is cold composting, which can take up to six months. The community compost piles would be hot composted. Hot composting requires a compost pile larger than about one meter cubed, the proper carbon to nitrogen ratio, and regular turning. However, the compost can be ready in as little as 18 days. During hot composting, the material will heat up to about 65°C, about the same temperature as a roast cooked to medium. The temperature too hot for rats and ants and is hot enough to kill weed seeds and pathogens.



Hot Compost will get hot enough to steam. But it has to be turned regularly.

Have You Decided to Stop Gardening At BARAGA?

Please notify us if you decide to leave your plot so we can re-assign it right away. We have over 100 people on the waiting list who would be happy to have your plot! Also, it would be preferable to both the new gardeners and your neighbours to have the new gardeners get the plot before it is overgrown in weeds.

Good On-Plot Composting

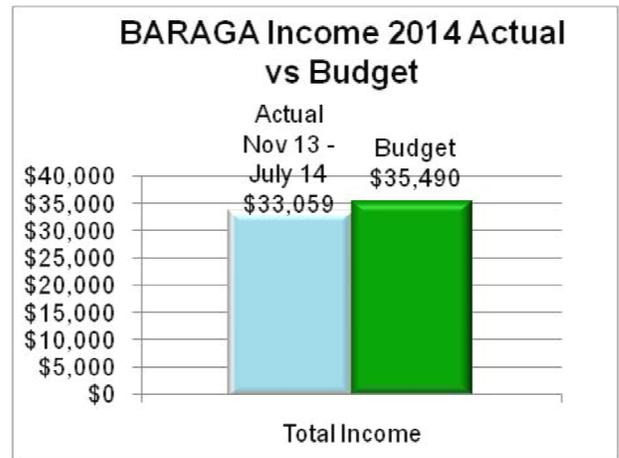
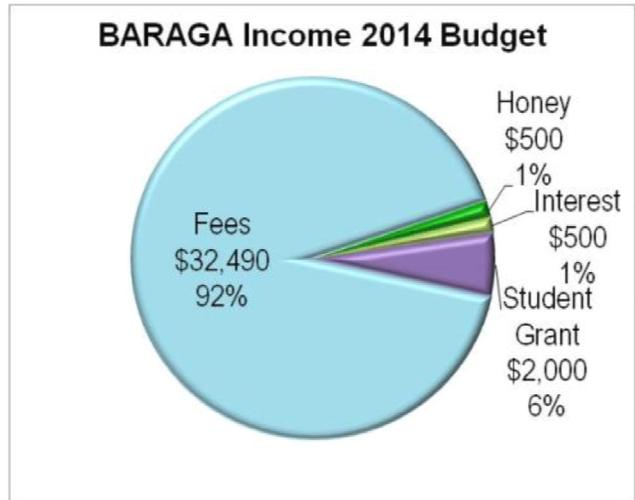
On a recent random walk around the garden, the Seedling Editor noticed the following examples of good on-plot composting by burying waste greens. Bravo to the holders of the plots pictured!



BARAGA Budget:

Where Do We Get Our Money?

BARAGA's budgeted income for 2014 is shown in the pie chart below. The largest source of income is membership fees. The bar chart shows the actual income to the end of July. Income from the student grant and from honey sales have not yet been accounted for.



Where Do We Spend Our Money?

BARAGA's budgeted expenses for 2014 are shown in the pie chart below. Our single biggest budgeted expense is for water. As of the end of July, water expenses were \$10,500 which is over the budget for the whole year.

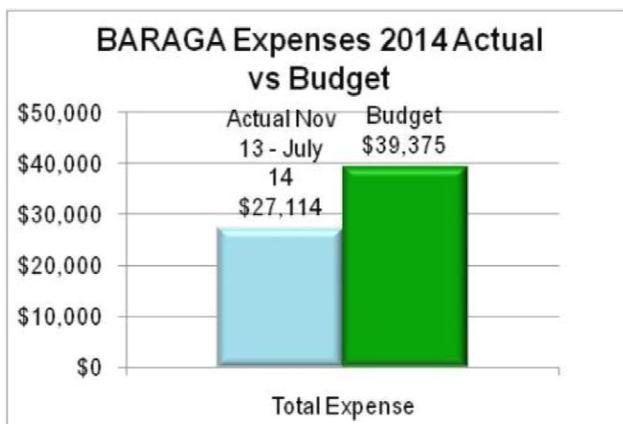
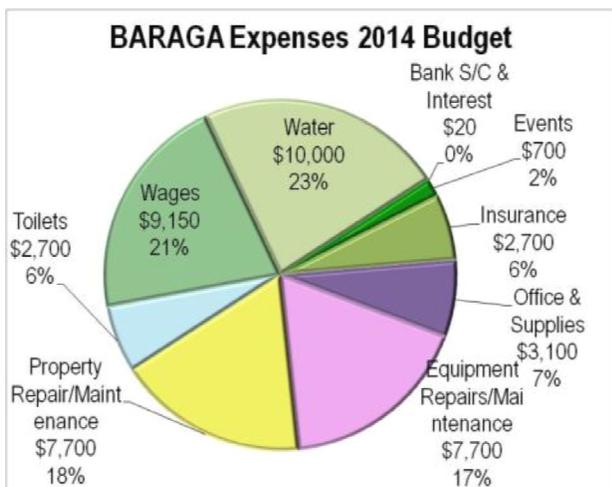
The next biggest budgeted expense is for wages for our summer student who takes care of the grounds. Our actual expense for student wages will be lower because our student left his job early.

Property maintenance includes expenses for the bees, shed and office maintenance, plot clean-up, and site improvements.

Property maintenance includes expenses for bees, shed and office maintenance, plot clean-up, and site improvements.

Office and supplies includes membership expenses, plot inspection expenses, and newsletter.

The bar chart shows actual expenses to the end of July. At the end of July we had spent 69% of our budget.



Address Changes

Don't forget to notify the Claire Skolos, the BARAGA membership coordinator, if you change your address, phone number, or e-mail address. If you are not getting e-mails from BARAGA and you think you should, we probably have an incorrect e-mail address.

Dates to Remember

September 13, October 11: Work Parties

November 1: Plots must be cleared except for actively growing winter crops, mulches or perennials.

BARAGA Officers and Board of Directors

Although directors' plot numbers and other contact information have been printed in The Seedling in previous years, several directors expressed concern about listing their plot numbers because of the vandalism to Abdul's plot. So plot numbers have been omitted.

Officers:

Abdul Majid - President

Abdul chairs the directors' meetings and takes care of administrative duties.

Don Hatch - Vice-President

Don is the Volunteer Coordinator. He matches up volunteers with jobs that need to be done. Don also takes care of general duties around the garden and assists with administrative duties. His e-mail is support@baraga.ca

Eleni Harvalias - Secretary

In addition to taking meeting minutes, handling BARAGA records, and handling BARAGA mail, Eleni coordinates structures approvals. Her e-mail is structures.approval@baraga.ca

Linda Dubois - Treasurer

Lin takes care of cheque deposits, reimbursements, and all financial records for BARAGA.

Directors-At-Large

Ramiro Coto - Landscaping

Ramiro organizes the flower beds and plantings in common areas. He has also been active in investigating fire ant issues.

Claire Skolos - Work Parties, Membership Coordinator

Claire organizes the work parties (work.parties@baraga.ca) and keeps all membership records, such as renewal status and changes of address (membership@baraga.ca).

Eric Crosby - Beekeeping

Eric takes care of our thriving bee colony.

Merv Hajnrych - Equipment Maintenance

Merv looks after our wheelbarrows; he keeps track of the number and keeps them in good shape.

Andrea Tylczak - Communications

Andrea puts together and sends out The Seedling and the News Flashes. Andrea also creates and sends out member surveys. Her e-mail is baraga.seedling@gmail.com

Doug Eng - Inspection letters/communications

Doug writes and sends out plot inspection letters. His e-mail is plot.inspection@baraga.ca

Heather Ewasew - Plot Rental

Heather keeps the BARAGA waiting list and assigns out new plots. She also participates in plot reinspections.

Luigi Aiello - Plot Inspectors Coordinator

Luigi organizes the regular plot inspections and compiles the results.

Liliana Hoogland - Public Works

Liliana has put up water posts and shut-off valve signs. She also answers the BARAGA phone.

Sandra Riley (Resigned)

Sandra was responsible for Integrated Plot Management. She commissioned the garden pests survey and was putting together a notebook on pest control. Her presence on the Board will be missed.

- The BARAGA mailing address is:
Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Assoc.
Box 209, 4974 Kingsway,
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4M9
- Contact phone number is: 604-525-4497.
- Please see the web page (baraga.ca) for the appropriate e-mail address.

The Seedling editor welcomes letters to the editor. The editor will publish letters that are not plainly administrative in nature and that she thinks would be of interest to other members. Letters will be published in coming News Flashes, on the BARAGA web site, or in The Seedling. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for length.

This newsletter was edited by Andrea Tylczak. (Unsigned articles are written by her.) Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of BARAGA.