

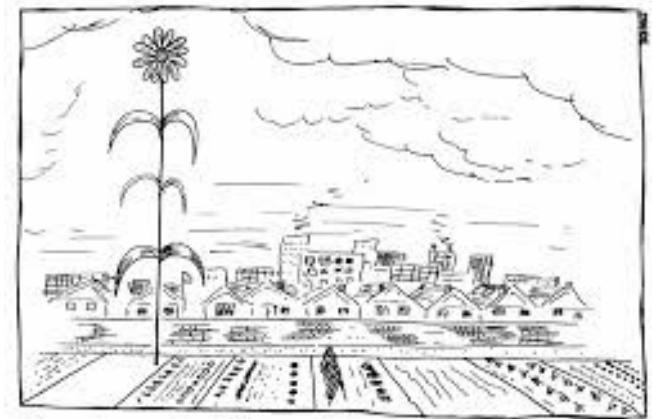
# THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association

April, 2015

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Most of the other gardeners  
were in favour of random drug tests.

## IMPORTANT STUFF COMING UP - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Work Parties:** April 4<sup>th</sup>  
Any time between 9-4 May 2<sup>nd</sup>  
June 6<sup>th</sup>

**Work Shops:**  
Beneficial Insects April 4<sup>th</sup> 1-3  
Composting Revisited May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1-3  
Water Conservation June 6<sup>th</sup> 1-3

**Seed and Plant Exchange:** April 25<sup>th</sup>  
Bring any seeds or plants you wish to exchange with other gardeners. Starts at 10 a.m. next to the office.

## NEW LOOK...and LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello everyone and welcome to the first 2015 edition of the BARAGA Seedling. I have offered to help with the publication of this newsletter but I will still be relying on Andrea Tylczak who has been your tireless editor and communications director for the past few years.

I am fairly new at 'publishing' and definitely not a techno-geek. I have had some experience with other organizations' newsletters though and would like to bring a new look to this newsletter. So, you'll notice a new format and new organization. I'd like our members to get a quick preview on page one of what to read as well as important dates to remember. In this issue you'll also find a pull-out calendar of events to help you remember important dates and information from BARAGA.

I would like to see more of a personal "BARAGA touch" to this newsletter, so I'd like to ask all of you to help make this newsletter an important and proud feature of our organization. Please contribute any good anecdotes, pictures, or

history related to BARAGA so that we can start focussing on what makes us tick!

I'd like all of us to show more pride in this wonderful garden.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Happy Planting!**

Ann Talbot

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Greetings, fellow gardeners.

Once again it is my privilege and honour to lead our garden community into the new season. Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Mother nature has blessed us so far this year with a mild winter and in the process heightened our desire to start the season earlier than usual. For those of us who can no longer wait to put seed to soil, it is a great opportunity to clean up the sheds of old and unwanted materials, replace the greenhouse polyethylene, redo our plot borders if needed, add manure and other soil amendments and start making our garden beds ready for the early start to the season.

As some of you are aware, the BARAGA board is also working hard to get the new year organized for the tasks that lay ahead. Some of the priorities for this year are:

Clearing the left over debris on the North border

Levelling the North and South pathway and seeding it with grass and clover mix

Building the new bridge near the East end of the ditch

Replacing the floor of the machine shed

Planting of the bee meadow and securing the apiary with a fence

Preparing the entrance area for the proposed composting site.

Though these tasks add up to a lot of work, we know that many hands make the task lighter. A 400+ strong membership has many

hours of community work to contribute towards making Baraga a better place. I know that by the time the work is finished we will all look back at what the community has achieved and be proud of it.

I have already had a site visit to Baraga from the city official in charge of our gardens and he was very pleased with the progress we have made during the last year. I have also sought clarification from him about the city bylaws regarding structures at Baraga. He was very clear about the size allowed for all future structures without permit: 107.5 square feet\*. This applies to all structures, with or without concrete foundation. The BARAGA board is reviewing the current regulations regarding structures and will present a report shortly. Till then please use the current handbook for reference.

I wish you all happy gardening and a bountiful harvest.

Yours sincerely

Abdul Majid

\*The letter from the city confirming the bylaw requirement is available at the membership page at: [baraga.ca](http://baraga.ca)



## 2015 AGM SUMMARY

*Andrea Tylczak*

Well over 100 members attended this year's AGM. Abdul Majid, our president, gave a recap of our achievements for 2014. Most of the directors also gave short summaries of what was accomplished. Emphasis was on participation.

Members passed the proposed 2015 budget after removing the \$22,000 allocated for the purchase of a new tractor. The Board was asked to bring the purchase of the new tractor as a separate decision in a Special General Meeting to be held later this winter or early spring, and to bring more details.

There was also a feeling among the membership that not enough details about the proposed community composting were available to make a good decision. The Board was asked to bring a more detailed plan to the Special General Meeting for a vote.

Members passed the motion that Directors adopt a policy of leniency toward old oversized greenhouses.

There were three additional motions on the agenda but we ran out of time, so those motions will also have to be considered at the Special General Meeting.

We elected a new Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary. We also elected five new Directors-at-Large.

## MEET YOUR DIRECTORS

*Andrea Tylczak*

BARAGA has a full and very enthusiastic Board this year. Here are their portfolios and contact e-mails.

**Abdul Majid** – As **president** Abdul chairs the directors' meetings and takes care of administrative duties.

**Don Hatch** – As **vice-president** Don takes care of general duties around the garden and assists with administrative duties. His e-mail is [support@baraga.ca](mailto:support@baraga.ca)

**Cathie Hickson** - As **secretary** Cathie takes meeting minutes, handles BARAGA records, and mail. Cathie also coordinates structures approvals. Her e-mail [structures.approval@baraga.ca](mailto:structures.approval@baraga.ca)

**Joyce Wishart** – As **treasurer**, Joyce takes care of cheque deposits, reimbursements, and all financial records for BARAGA. **Carlie Franklin** assists Joyce with the Treasurer duties and will also be working on the web page.

### Directors-At-Large

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

**Glenn Helmlinger** is coordinating the planning for Community Composting.

**Claire Skolos** keeps all membership records, such as renewal status and changes of address ([membership@baraga.ca](mailto:membership@baraga.ca)).

**Roman Bobrownik** looks after our wheelbarrows and other equipment. In addition, Roman will be organizing work parties ([work.parties@baraga.ca](mailto:work.parties@baraga.ca)) and work hour reporting ([work.reporting@baraga.ca](mailto:work.reporting@baraga.ca))

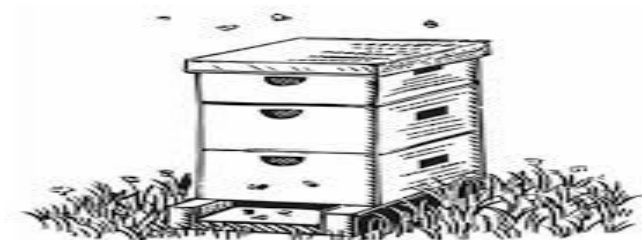
**Ann Talbot** coordinates BARAGA community activities as well as the education plot, and food bank. Ann is also the editor of the Seedling. Her e-mail is [seedling@baraga.ca](mailto:seedling@baraga.ca).

**Andrea Tylczak**, as **communications director** sends out the News Flashes, updates the BARAGA website and assists with the Seedling. Her e-mail is [seedling@baraga.ca](mailto:seedling@baraga.ca).

**Doug Eng, Luigi Aiello, Liliana Hoogland, Ravil Chamgoulov**

*This team organizes the regular **plot inspections**, compiles the results, writes and sends out plot inspection letters, and coordinates re-inspections. Their e-mail is [plot.inspection@baraga.ca](mailto:plot.inspection@baraga.ca)*

**Dullss Kleamyck** keeps the BARAGA waiting list and assigns out **new plots**. Her e-mail is [waitlist@baraga.ca](mailto:waitlist@baraga.ca).



**BARAGA BEES ARE ALREADY ACTIVE**

*Andrea Tylczak and Eric Crosby*

Seven, and possibly an eighth, bee colonies have survived our short winter. That's the same number of colonies we had last spring. Eric, our beekeeper, split some of the colonies in July so we had thirteen colonies when we started the winter.

Although the number of colonies lost may sound high, it is normal to lose a few colonies over the winter. Bees can die of starvation (not enough honey to carry them through the winter), pesticides, or parasites. Eric is very happy with the strength of the seven remaining colonies.

Both of our Top Bar Hive colonies survived the winter. (A Top Bar Hive is a different style of hive that produces less honey but is said to be more natural for the bees.)

The bees have been out foraging for pollen and water since February. BARAGA is planting pussy willows and some other early-blooming plants to make sure that the bees have plenty of food available in early spring. The bees have already begun brooding (that is, raising new bees) and at least one round of brood has already hatched. The cycle is 21 days.

**A FEW TIPS FOR BARAGANS**

**Tip #1: Cautions for Use of Mulch**

*Andrea Tylczak*

Members have seen many articles in the Seedling and on the BARAGA website urging them to mulch, mulch, mulch. However, you do need to be careful about the source of the mulch.

Last spring a very skilled and knowledgeable fellow gardener told me a the story of his bad experience with mulch: He had a number of squash plants he had started in pots. They were doing great. When the time came, he put them in the ground and a few days later mulched them with a bale of straw that he had bought. To his shock, the squash plants promptly started to wither and die.

He later surmised that the farmer had treated the field where he was growing the grass to make the straw with broad-leaf weed killer. The weed killer was absorbed into the grass plants and then released into the soil around my friend's squash plants.

The lesson of the story is, if you use straw mulch, make sure it's organically grown.

**Tip #2: If You Spot a Water Leak***Andrea Tylczak, Doug Eng*

If you spot a leak in one of the water lines or faucets, please do the following:

1. Shut off the water at the main valve for that branch. The main water line runs just east of the parking lot; from the main line there are tees to pipes that run east and west along most of the paths. There are main valves at the tees. For lines going east of the main, there are shutoffs at the south end of plot 1, the north end of plot 35, the south end of plot 238, the north end of plot 259, and the north end of plot 340. For lines going west of the main, there are shutoffs at the south end of plot 162, the south end of plot 239, the north end of plot 258, and the north end of plot 339.

The locations of the valves are indicated by yellow signs.

The valve is under a cover as shown in the second picture.

2. Notify one of the directors immediately. If you see a director around, tell them. If you don't, please phone us at 604-842-8571 or e-mail at [support@baraga.ca](mailto:support@baraga.ca).



**With the looming water shortage this summer, it is really important that we keep on top of this.**

**Tip #3: Watch out for what is lurking in your gardening gloves!**

One of our members recently reported that she picked up her gloves out of her shed, put them on, and immediately the end of her finger was bitten by something. Apparently a spider had been making a home in her gloves.

She would like to advise her fellow gardeners to always shake out your gloves before you put them on.

**CHANGES TO BARAGA WORK PARTY/SERVICE HOURS***Roman Bobrownik*

Over the past few years, we've spoken with many BARAGA members regarding concerns about work parties and service hours. This year we will be implementing some changes that we hope will help in keeping records. For future recording of your work service, please use the following new guidelines:

**Work Parties:**

There will be **only one** scheduled work party per month. To avoid confusion, they will be held on the **first Saturday of the month** beginning in April. Please meet at the Office at 9:00 a.m. Please keep an eye out for notices as well.

**Service Hours:**

**Every** Saturday morning, a new "Work List" of jobs will be posted outside the Office. Members may select a job and complete that job at their discretion **and on their own time**. Once the job has been completed, record the information on

your **“Service Hours Time Sheet”** (available at the Office or on line) and have any director sign it. When you have completed six (6) hours of service for each plot, hand in your sheet to either Roman Bobrownik plot 177, or Ann Talbot plot 265 **ONLY**; this will avoid doing a paper trail chase!

Please note that the recording process of Service Hours, for those members who signed up for specific jobs at the AGM, is exactly the same. It is our hope that your requests for simplicity and consistency, in the processes for Work Parties and Service Hours, will make it run more smoothly. We welcome any further suggestions that you might have.



## COMPOSTING

*Ramiro Coto*

Editor’s Note: As we all know, the City of Burnaby has a new by-law regarding garbage disposal. We can no longer put green material into the garbage bins. With this in mind, Ramiro is putting together a series of articles to show the benefits of composting. You can also visit the <http://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Garbage-Recycling/Organics-and-Clean-Wood-Disposal-Bans.html> for more information.

## WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is simply recreating the conditions to allow nature do what nature does best: recycle organic materials. Bacteria, fungi, worms, and many other little critters transform a pile of seemingly useless garden left overs into reusable and wonderful soil.

The green components of garden leftovers such as leaves, soft stems, fruits, and peels are high in nitrogen, sugar, and water. All of these are highly sought-after components needed by microbes to make more of themselves. These components are readily available and are used rapidly. However, a compost made only of these materials is quickly transformed into a slimy, smelly and unwanted matter.

The brown components of garden left overs such as dry leaves, branches, and roots are high in cellulose which in turn is made up of mostly long carbon chains. These components are not as readily available, but are needed by all organisms to make energy. A compost made up of mostly branches, logs, and thick roots can take many years to be decomposed into usable soil.

The best compost is one that is made up of the right mixture of green and brown components. By having a balanced green and brown mixture, the microbes, worms and small arthropods will have the perfect condition to use all the water, carbon and nitrogen available to make great soil very quickly. In fact, with the right temperature, moisture, green-brown mixture, and shredding of materials, a great compost soil can be created in two to three weeks. This fast composting takes a lot of planning and work. Most of us prefer the natural method which can take up from six to twelve months.

In the slow, or “natural” method, all we need to know is the mixture of green to brown and then let nature take it from there. If you want to shorten the process, add water and turn the

pile once a week. By turning the pile you are allowing much needed oxygen to get to the microbes thereby speeding the composting process.

The recommended green (nitrogen) to brown (carbon) ration is 1 to 30. This ratio allows the microbes and other critters to transform all the materials on the compost pile into nice and soft soil at an adequate rate. Too much of the greens and the pile will overheat, and too much of the browns and the pile will take forever to change.

### BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

When we think of composting we only think that we are making good natural clean soil, but in fact there are many reasons why we should all compost, and even if one lives in an apartment one can still compost.

For starters, there are the economic reasons. If we create our own soil, then we don't need to buy it, not to mention that we don't know what is in the store-bought soils. The soil that we help create by composting helps in retaining water, minerals, and help keep pests away, which also means savings and more fruits and vegetables. Another economic reason is that if we all composted, we would not have to pay so much for garbage collection.

Another very important reason for composting is the environment. By composting, we would be helping the landfills last longer, save water, save on fertilizers, and eliminated pesticides. It has been calculated that roughly 40% of the city's generated garbage is made up of compostable materials.

One last reason for composting is that most cities in our area are starting to push for people to compost. That means we simply do not have a choice. In other words, if we do not compost,

we would be charged fees that would not be able to afford.

On the next Seedling we will discuss the different types of composting even one that can be done in an apartment.



### PLANTING GUIDES FROM UBC BOTANICAL GARDEN

*Author: Tony Maniezzo Web Published and Posted: January 26, 2007*

This guide, catalogues, gardening books, and the internet can be used to help you plan what to grow at different times of the year

In **early March**, sow radishes, broad beans, mustard greens and peas.

In **mid- to late March**, sow cabbage, salad blends, peas, beets, parsnips, radishes, onions and spinach. In **April**, sow spinach, green onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce and Swiss chard.

In **May**, sow pole beans, turnips, bush beans and corn.

See more at:

<http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/articles/vegetable-gardening-for-beginners#sthash.2pjwuBs4>.



## WORKSHOPS FOR OUR MEMBERS

*Ann Talbot*

As you may have noticed, we are scheduling workshops to follow our regular work party days. This is to help share our expertise with each other as well as to learn more about best practices for gardening. If you have any suggestions or ideas on future workshops, please let us know. You can send a note to [seedling@baraga.ca](mailto:seedling@baraga.ca).

The next workshop will be on beneficial insects for the garden. At the moment, I am trying to rustle up some experts in the area. The intention of this workshop was to talk about many different beneficial insects from bees to butterflies to beetles. It is also hoped that we can talk about the many natural ways to control pests in the garden without pesticides. If I can't find someone to lead the workshop, I'm hoping that we gardeners can just get together and share our experiences, knowledge and interests about bugs. Hope to see you on April 4<sup>th</sup> from 1-3!

*This newsletter was edited by Ann Talbot and Andrea Tylczak. We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome contributions from you. Please feel free to e-mail us at [baraga.seedling@gmail.com](mailto:baraga.seedling@gmail.com)*

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Please see the web page ([baraga.ca](http://baraga.ca)) for the appropriate e-mail addresses.

