

THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association

June, 2015

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FIRST ANNUAL SOLSTICE PARTY



Mark your calendars!

SUNDAY, JUNE 21ST

**FIRST ANNUAL BARAGA SOLSTICE
PARTY AND PLANT AND SEED
EXCHANGE**

6-8 PM

We'll gather in the picnic area around the parking lot. Please bring your:

- plants/seeds for exchanging
- picnic, including your picnic blanket, chairs, food, beverages, dishes, and anything you might want to share with your fellow gardeners.
- Also bring your own BOCCE balls! We'll see if we can pull together our first **BARAGA BOCCE TOURNAMENT**.

IMPORTANT STUFF COMING UP - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Work Parties:	June 6 th
Any time between 9-4	July 4 th
	Aug 1 st
Work Shops:	
Water Conservation (postponed from June 6 th)	July 4 th
Planting for the Winter	Aug 1 st
<i>Starting at 1; Come and share!</i>	
Food Bank Pick-ups	June 14 th
<i>Every Sunday before 2 pm</i>	
First Annual Solstice Party!	June 21 st
Plant and Seed Exchange	June 21 st
BARAGA Picnic	Aug. 15 th

**COMMUNITY
SEED AND PLANT
EXCHANGE**

INSPIRATION FROM GARDENERS

ACROSS THE BORDER

The following article was written in 2008 by Valerie French, who was the secretary of Sunshine Gardens in Austin, Texas. We got permission to reprint parts of this after one of our directors, Dullss sent it to us. It is quite relevant to our times of change. Check out the website:

<http://sunshinecommunitygardens.org/>

A wise gardener commented recently that we should not describe the process of providing spaces to garden as "plot rental". What Sunshine Community Gardens provides is not a 20x20' piece of private property, but the opportunity to commit to gardening. Sunshine gardeners are not 'renters', but stewards. Tenancy is a legal relationship: the tenant has responsibilities to the landlord usually detailed in a long document with small print, mostly involving paying rent on time and leaving everything in working order at the end of the lease. Paying rent is a good and necessary start - but it isn't gardening.

Each plot in Sunshine Community Gardens is a garden - a piece of land intended for the cultivation of plants. Cultivating plants requires ongoing commitments: to till, to plant, to water, to weed, to maintain, to harvest, and to clear for the next season so it can all be done again. Gardening is something like a job: if you don't show up regularly, the tomatoes die, the flowers droop, and you don't get 'paid'. And eventually the garden stops being a garden. In a community garden, failing to tend a garden has immediate and wider effects. For most of the year, a garden can be overrun by weeds within two weeks. Plants that are not tended become insect breeding grounds. In mid-summer, unharvested produce rots on the vine, and the rats come for it. The neighboring gardeners - and neighbors are rarely more than three feet away - battle weed-seeds, runners, insects, and vermin attracted or bred by the failing garden. They cannot address the source of the problem without trespassing on their

neighbor gardener, violating both written rules and basic courtesy. For the same reason, what produce there is goes to waste instead of being harvested and donated to a food bank, or simply eaten. Those who have volunteered to help maintain the organization spend their time policing "messy plots" instead of helping the community as a whole, and become burned out and disillusioned. Gardens that "return to nature" cannot be left there: eventually, someone will have to uproot the weeds and re-create the garden.

And then there is the wider community. It includes the people waiting for a space to garden here...

These outside commitments - to other gardens, to the organization, to the wider community - make community gardening an act of stewardship: an ethical responsibility.

As Board secretary, I have seen and participated in closely-reasoned legal arguments referencing the Site Rules and Bylaws point-by-point, mathematical debates about the acceptable ratios of weeds to vegetables, and the fine procedural points of mailing and verifying receipt of "clean-it-up" notices. These distract from the ultimate point. If the natural law theory applies anywhere, it ought to be here, and that higher law is this:

Each plot is a garden. Therefore, each plot should be readily identifiable as a garden (i.e., space used for the cultivation of plants), and each plot needs at least one gardener (i.e., person actively engaged in cultivating plants).

That simple. The purpose of our organization is to provide opportunities to garden, to ensure that each garden has a gardener or gardeners that take care of it, and that the gardens as a whole are maintained and are an asset to the wider community.

Equally, every single gardener here has a duty to tend the land that has been entrusted to them as a garden, and to maintain it as an asset for themselves and for the wider community. **Please make certain your plot has a gardener this spring.**

Editor's Note: Thank you Valerie for your awesome articulation of what it means to be a community garden and not an 'allotment' garden.

EGM SUMMARY

BARAGA held an EGM on May 23rd at the gardens. 117 members registered. There were four items on the agenda, that had been brought forward from the last AGM. The following motions were carried or defeated:

- A motion that a tractor be purchased for an amount not to exceed \$22,000 was **DEFEATED**.
- A motion was made that the members approve the establishment of community compost area to be established and maintained with the currently allocated budget (\$2,000). The motion was **CARRIED**.
- The motion to include the paragraph "*BARAGA is subject to the laws of Canada and BC and the bylaws of Metro Vancouver and Burnaby, and we are subject to orders and instructions from City of Burnaby, which is our landlord. In case of conflict between any of the above and the rules in the Handbook, the laws, bylaws, and instructions mentioned above take precedent.*" was **DEFEATED**.
- A motion that the wording be revised to: *waste plant material from each garden plot should must be put back into the soil of the plot to the maximum extent possible. Dumping anything outside your garden plot or off-site is irresponsible. It is strongly recommended that all plots have an area set aside for a compost bin or pile. It is not permissible to put materials that are banned by Metro Vancouver waste regulations into the garbage bins.* The motion was **CARRIED**.
- A motion was made that section 7.3 of the

by-laws be rewritten and presented for consideration to the membership at the next AGM. The motion was **CARRIED**.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings, fellow gardeners.

What an incredible start to our growing season so far. Lots of sunshine and temperatures reaching the high 20's, I am tempted to try and grow oranges right here at BARAGA if this kind of weather trend continues for the Lower Mainland.

It has also been the driest May on record for our region and we know what that means for BARAGA. It means higher than normal water usage translating into even higher water bills. As you are aware, our water bill for the whole year is our biggest expense in our budget. Every year over the past three years we have incurred an increase in water consumption as well as the price we pay for this essential commodity.

I would greatly urge you to be careful while watering your garden and use simple measures to ensure conservation of water. Please refrain from using sprinklers or leaving the water running unattended on your plots. Drip irrigation is one of the best ways to water only your plants around the root zone and not the weeds which are waiting to germinate.

Most plants when planted earlier in the season have an established root system which requires little or no extra watering. For those of you starting to plant now, early morning watering of your seedlings is better than watering at the peak of day temperature as most of the moisture is lost to evaporation.

On a sad note I would like to say goodbye to a very valuable, hardworking and lovely person who has resigned from the Board after doing a fantastic job as our membership secretary. Claire, thank you for all your efforts and for all the time you spent working to make Baraga a better place. Hopefully you will now have more time to spend at your garden. See you there.

I would also like to welcome our new Groundskeeper for the season, Gillian Prouse. I am sure she will be a valuable addition to our community.

For those of you who are wondering about the work being done at the east end of the ditch, do not worry, Fred is not building another greenhouse. He is connecting the widened eastern pathway to the park with a bridge so that we can get the tractor and lawn mower across. This will be our eastern “perimeter pathway”.

This will enable us to create an extra plot in the space where the lawn mower and the tractor used to get to the other side of the ditch.

If you have any suggestions, concerns or comments, please let me know. I wish you all happy gardening and a bountiful harvest.

Yours sincerely, Abdul Majid

FIRE ANT PROJECT AT BARAGA

Sean McCann

Editor’s Note: Sean is working on a fire ant project with Dr. Rob Higgins from Thompson Rivers University. This is his report on the work they are doing on the BARAGA educational plot.

Our experiment consists of six plots, three are unmodified, and three have exclusion fencing consisting of a 2-foot aluminum barrier buried 1 foot into the ground. Our hope is that this aluminum barrier will help prevent queens from entering the plot and colonizing it. We are monitoring our experimental plots for colonization of fire ants. Of three treated plots, the northernmost has had colonization, most likely due to vegetation overhanging the exclusion fence. The two other treated plots have no colonization and far fewer foraging fire ants than the unfenced plots.

We have examined a few nests in the control plots in order to describe their architecture.

The technique we used was wax casting and excavation, where we pour hot wax down the nest and then carefully excavate and measure the extent of the nest. The majority of the surface-visible nest (such as that under debris) consists of superficial brood chambers, where the ants place developing larvae in order for them to grow quickly at the hotter temperatures of the surface. Below this are a network of tunnels and chambers, including evacuation chambers where the workers place brood when the nest is under attack or the surface temperature becomes too hot. The depth of most of these features is quite shallow, but often extend to at least 25 cm below the surface. What surprised us though is one particular nest where two superficial brood chambers were connected by a 60 cm long and 37 cm deep tunnel, probably used to shuttle queens back and forth quickly and safely while they go about depositing eggs in one chamber or the other. This type of deep tunnel could also be used to evacuate queens in case of attack on the nest, so bear this in mind if you dig and drown the ants for control!



Ant trail formed from poured wax.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A gardener sent in a letter for the Seedling regarding the May 16th posting of notices on members structures and greenhouses. He was quite upset and added, *“that one older lady was almost crying after reading the note on her greenhouse. To calm her down, I assured her that if it comes to that I will fix her green house.”*

We exchanged e-mails and decided to edit and paraphrase part of his letter. Part of his response: *“I have been gardening since the 80's and over the years I have seen some very bad examples of behavior: people arguing over a little water, others over a few branches falling on the path, etc. But on the other hand, I have met very nice people who also enjoy gardening, breathing fresh, clean air and learning about composting, organic gardening, raised-beds... and the vegetables we get: impossible to find in stores.”*

So, this is actually two letters from the editor, both with the same message:

We need to consider how we behave with our neighbours at BARAGA. Let's talk before we act in a manner that can be construed as threatening or aggressive. And let's collaborate. We are very fortunate to have this space, wonderful neighbours and this great resource; let's work together to make it even better.



MEET GILLIAN!

Gillian Prouse is our new 'garden-keeper' so you'll be seeing her riding the lawn mower, cleaning up, whacking weeds and generally taking care of our common property. Gillian is going into her second year of Midwifery at UBC. She is very glad to be working in such a beautiful place, working outdoors and meeting nice people. Her favourite part of the garden is all of the little critters like snails and bees; she also likes chatting with the gardeners about their plants. Welcome to BARAGA, Gillian. It will be a pleasure working with you!



TYPES OF COMPOSTING

We already discussed the importance of composting in the last Seedling, so now we are going to learn about the different types of composting. However, to keep this article short and simple we will only give a short description of some types of composting, some of which can be easily done at BARAGA.

Vermicomposting: this type of composting is made up of plastic containers called wormeries stacked together. The bottom layer is ready to be used, the middle one is being digested by worms, and the top layer is where the new waste is added. The wormery needs red worms that feed on kitchen scraps. It can be placed on a garage, a shed or a balcony. This type of composting works great for people who do not have much in terms of areas for composting.

Bokashi Bins: this type of composting consists of two bokashi bins and a pack of microorganisms. One bin is used to let the microorganisms do their work and the other to add new kitchen scraps. The microorganisms speed up the fermenting of the scraps and the result is a liquid that can be called compost tea that when diluted with water can be applied to the plants. This is also a type of composting that works great for people with a lot of kitchen scraps and no place to compost.

Bin Composting: this type of composting is more applicable to what we can do at BARAGA. It consists of using plastic or metal bins, wood, bricks, blocks, wire, and even stacked tires. The size of these bins can vary in size, and depends on the amount of materials that need to be composted. All these bins have advantages and disadvantages. For example, plastic bins need less watering than wood or wire, and last a lot longer than wood if protected from direct sun. The shapes and sizes of these bins are only limited by the imagination. Many can be bought and be ready to use, others need simple assembling, and many more can be constructed using available materials.



Trench composting; this is my favorite type of composting as it can be done any time, as big or small as needed, no special equipment needed, and once completed no need to do anything else. All you need to do is dig a trench two or three feet deep and as wide as needed. Fill it with all the materials you have. To work best, stack the materials in layers of brown and greens, and finally cover it all with a thick layer of soil. That is it. Nature will do the rest.

We all know that composting is not only good for the soil, it is the only option we have. To find more information on these and many other types of composting simply type composting on your favorite search engine or go to your nearest public library. There is a lot of great information on composting readily available for anyone willing to learn more. Good luck and great composting.

Ramiro Coto B.Sc. in Agriculture

WATER CONSERVATION AT BARAGA



WHY CONSERVE WATER?

The answer lies in our region's limited ability to store water. Much of the rainfall and snowmelt in the watersheds cannot be stored for use during dry weather. Population growth in the Lower Mainland has also led to increased demand for water. The GVRD supplies drinking water to two million residents in 18 municipalities. Outdoor use accounts for about 25 per cent of total water consumption, with a great deal of that water going towards keeping our gardens alive and our lawns green during the summer.

http://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/waterwise26694.pdf

WHAT DOES WATER CONSERVATION MEAN TO BARAGA?

Water was the biggest single expense for BARAGA last year. We spent \$16,965 last year and we are budgeted for \$14,750 this year. Our expense in 2013 was \$18,000. We need to get the word out regarding water conservation. Here are some ideas that came up at our last board meeting:

- Remind gardeners of our by-laws for water conservation. For example: **NO sprinklers allowed.**
- Put out information on where to purchase water barrels: **Cheap** food-grade barrels available in Abbotsford 778-808-3534
- Ration the water.

Editor's Note: Please read the Letter from the President for more ideas on how to reduce the pressure on our water supply.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW GARDENERS

So far this year, we have welcomed 29 new gardeners to BARAGA. There are currently 79 people on our waitlist.

We are very impressed with the hard work these gardeners are putting into improving their garden space. Here is an example of how a garden can transform from a pile of concrete to a cultivated (and pampered!) garden.

BEFORE



AFTER!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Abdul Majid, President

support@baraga.ca

Don Hatch, Vice-President, Structures and
Acting Membership Secretary

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membership@baraga.ca

Cathie Hickson, Secretary and Structures

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Carlie Franklin, Co-Treasurer

Andrea Tylczak, Communications

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Roman Bobrownik, Work Parties, Work hour
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Ann Talbot, Community Events, Work Hour
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Dullss Kleamyck, New Members, Wait list and
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Ramiro Coto, Flower Beds

Glenn Helmlinger, Community Composting

Doug Eng, Liliana Hoogland, Plot Inspections

Luigi Aiello, Plot Inspections

Ravil Chamgoulov Plot Inspections

plot.inspection@baraga.ca

The BARAGA mailing address is:
Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Assoc.
Box 209, 4974 Kingsway,
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4M9
Contact phone number is: 604-842-8571.
Please see the web page (baraga.ca) for the appropriate
e-mail addresses.

*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*

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

We are happy to announce our first pick-up for Food Bank donations will begin on **Sunday, June 14th**. We have changed our pick-up days to Sunday as the Community Food Angels organization that picks up the food is very busy on Mondays.

Community Angel Food Runners is the prepared and perishable food recovery program of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society. Through the Community Angel Food Runners, quality food is donated from gardens, restaurants, hotels and cafeterias and then delivered to meal-providing agencies. The program runs seven days a week and saves over 870,000 pounds of food a year which would otherwise be wasted. Instead we are able to provide 1.25 million meals for people in need.

PLEASE HELP US HELP OTHERS:

- Drop off your donation in the white box by the second shed next to the BARAGA office anytime before 2 pm on Sunday afternoon
- Pick-up will be between 2-3 pm on Sundays.
- We want to provide fresh, healthy, delicious, nutritious, produce.
- Please clean (relatively) vegetables – dirt impacts the cleaning of the refrigerator truck.
- Please top off any unedible part of the produce.
- Place produce in bags to help out the Food Bank folks.

THANK YOU!