



The SEEDLING

Newsletter of the Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Association

STARTING WITH SEEDS

by David Tamblin



Many gardeners feel that starting crops from seeds is the most satisfying way to grow. Seeds aren't cheap, but are less expensive than buying seedlings. They also allow a great deal of choice of variety and quantity. Picking up a free West Coast Seeds catalogue is a good way to start with seeds. The catalogue offers a wide variety of organic, non-GMO seeds and a handy planting guide. West Coast Seeds is a local company and their seeds are tested for local conditions.

Start planting seeds when the average daytime air temperature reaches 10 degrees Celcius. Seeds may germinate at lower temperatures, but won't grow until the weather warms. Certain crops can be started by the end of February, or early March. Cooler crops can be planted in April, but seeds planted somewhat later tend to catch up to earlier, riskier plantings. Warm weather crops must wait until the average night-time temperature of the soil reaches 10 degrees Celcius, usually towards the end of May in our area.

Seeds planted directly in the ground will develop the strongest root system and tend to be stronger than transplants which are subject to disturbance, damage, or shock. You must decide between starting an earlier crop started elsewhere in better conditions or direct planting later.

Direct crops need fine tilth soil so roots can grow unimpeded, and water and air penetrate the soil easily. Many gardeners sow lots more seeds than required. This allows you to choose the sturdiest seedlings and perhaps enjoy a small harvest of plant-lets when thinning.

All seeds are dormant when planted. Something must be done to break dormancy. For most, moisture and warmth are enough, while others also need light. Seed packages will recommend a planting depth. Generally, shallower is better provided you are able to ensure moisture is maintained at all times. Seeds planted too deeply may remain dormant, and those too cold or too wet may rot. Press seeds in with a board or other tool to make sure there is good contact with the soil. A light sprinkling of sand or peat will protect the seeds.

Seeds can be started elsewhere - such as a sunny windowsill or small home greenhouse - for transplanting to the garden when conditions are right. Most germinated seeds grow a root to reach soil nutrients and anchor themselves. When the first leaves appear, it is essential to provide good light so the seedling can begin the essential process of photosynthesis.

Potting mixes are great for starting seedlings in a seed tray, peat pellets, or reused pots or trays. A chopstick is a handy tool for prying seedlings from crowded pots to plant in growing trays. When working with seedlings, always handle plants by their leaves, never their stems.

Given warm day temperatures and cool night ones, moderate moisture at all times, the seedling will reach a transplantable size quite quickly. Seedlings that are coddled or given too much fertilizer tend to be leggy and brittle. Plants raised indoors need to be hardened off by gradually introducing them to garden temperatures and conditions. This is done by exposing them to increasingly long periods in harsher conditions.

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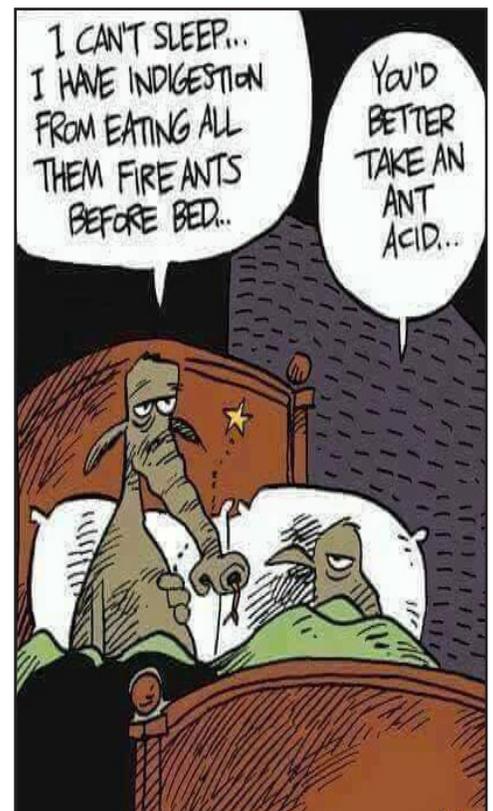
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Ann Talbot

Hello fellow gardeners! We've had an amazing early spring and people have already been busy harvesting! It's been a busy few months at BARAGA. Here's what we've been up to:

Community Service Work

We had two very successful work parties to date with many members already completing their 6 hours. Many members have contributed far and above on projects such as the irrigation system, wheelbarrow repairs, equipment maintenance, parking lot improvements...the list is endless. Many thanks to all who have worked so hard!

Garbage Clean-Up

We filled two large rented bins in April, thanks to a work party and other members. This was part of our 5-year plan and will be set into the budget. We are looking at another rental in the fall, but this may involve an on-going contract with a recycling/garbage hauling company.

Equipment Maintenance and Help

Thanks to John and Dick for the great help in taking care of our equipment.

Wheelbarrows

We now have an inventory, 3 new wheelbarrows, some new flatless tires, and some very nicely reconditioned wheelbarrows. Please return the wheelbarrows to the office AS SOON AS YOU ARE FINISHED with them. They are a hot commodity on a busy day, so your consideration is appreciated.

City Meetings

We have met with the Manager of Business Operations for BARAGA, the Waste Management team for Burnaby, and other companies associated with the City of Burnaby. We are looking at a contract with a recycling company to help us manage our waste more effectively.

Wood Chips

Some of these meetings have had very

positive results; we now have an arrangement with Bartlett Tree Experts to deliver chips as often as they please in return for a day or two of volunteer chipping of our brown waste. I'm looking at having some delivered to the east end.

Garbage Area

The area near the entrance where the bins ramps were will be allocated for garbage and recycling. The goal is to reduce our garbage to ONE BIN only with the regular pick-ups and then 4-6 recycling bins for cardboard and plastics to be picked up twice a month.

Bee Meadow Redesign

The south side of the Bee Meadow was 'taken back'. The main challenge has been the amount of maintenance required to keep up the Bee Meadow... which has turned into a Weed Meadow. Trees that were planted were not thriving and the area was simply too big to manage. Using the platform for housing the bees was also under review and with the okay from the beekeeper, we are looking at turning this into a picnic area with more formal landscaping that will involve low-maintenance and bee-friendly arbors, fruit trees, perennial and annuals and paths to walk around in. The bees have been inspected are doing well in their current location.

Groundskeeping

We have hired a student, Matthew Kolrud, who will be working for us through the summer as the BARAGA groundskeeper. We have been very fortunate to get a Federal Summer Student Grant to help contribute to his salary. We even had a personal call from our MP for South Burnaby, Kennedy Stewart to let us know that he'd gotten more money for us than we had applied for.

Have Questions or Feedback?

If you have any feedback on this report, please feel free to contact us at: directors@baraga.ca

Food Bank Welcomes Fresh Produce



With an unusually warm spring, the growing season started early this year. As you pick your first crops, please consider putting some of what you harvest into the Foodbank donation box.

Our fresh vegetables and herbs are always welcomed by the cooks, who use them in soups and stews for people who need to come to eat at various locations in the Lower Mainland.

Your donations are picked up by dedicated Foodrunner drivers every Monday after 12 noon. We ask that you put your veggies in the box Sunday evening, or better still on Monday morning.

The Foodbank website has lots of information on the programs they run.

Find more information at: www.foodbank.bc.ca/our-programs

BARAGA Annual Picnic to Be Held on August 13



Mark your calendars! BARAGA's annual picnic will be held on Saturday, August 13th.

This is a potluck event, so plan to bring a food item to share with others.

Produce Contests

Bring your BARAGA-grown produce and enter to win prizes in our contests for the following categories:

- Best vegetable
- Best flower arrangement
- Best baking
- Best canning
- Best fruit
- Best presentation
- Most unusual

All produce must be grown at BARAGA. Baking and canning entries must contain ingredients grown at BARAGA. Please include a list of ingredients with baking and canning entries.

Remember these headings and keep them in mind when harvesting your produce – be prepared to enter it/them in the judging events.

Picnic Schedule

- 3:00 – 4:15 - Best in garden entries
- 4:15 – 4:45 - Voting on contest entries
- 5:00 - 6:00 - Food tables open
- 6:00 - Contest winners announced



MEET MATTHEW KOLSRUD

Matthew is our new BARAGA groundskeeper. He is currently studying at Langara College and is happy to have an opportunity to work outside. He is Burnaby raised and graduated from Burnaby South Secondary. He has been working hard learning to operate all the machinery and has been keeping up with all of the mowing and weed cutting that needs to be done. Thanks Matthew!

Garbage & Recycling

Garbage and recycling continue to be issues at BARAGA. Although we rented two large bins in the spring to take away a lot of old debris, we continue to see recyclables and weeds in the bin. We have set up a small recycling station by the office, but are finding it hard to keep this up. With that in mind, we are looking at commercial companies to manage our recycling, which will be set up by the container and garbage bins. We will have bins for cardboard and plastics, two products that we seem to generate the most. In the meantime, please pack out what you pack in.

The green compost is another matter. We have started a compost pile on the north side of the bee meadow, but this is at the experimental stage. We are already generating some compost from this, but the compost is being contaminated by noxious weeds such as morning glory and horsetail. We are now looking at renting special bins for the noxious weeds only along with the healthy compost which we will be able to generate for the garden.

In the meantime, PLEASE compost on your plot. It is your responsibility to take care of ALL of your plot, including the compost you generate. If you aren't sure how to dispose of your compost, talk to a fellow gardener to get some ideas of what they do.

PLEASE RECYCLE & COMPOST EVERYTHING FROM YOUR PLOT!

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Important Dates to Remember



Plot Inspections

1st Saturday of the Month

Work Parties

2nd Saturday of the Month

Food Bank Pick-Ups

Mondays from 10am-12pm

Contact Information

Mailing Address

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Facebook Group

www.facebook.com/groups/146218968736245