

THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association

BARAGA, Volume 33, Number 2, June 2014

Pest Control - European Fire Ants (*Myrmica rubra*)

-Ramiro Coto BSc

Plant Health Care Professional

Most red ant infestations reported so far are restricted to specific areas in the City. New infestations appear to be caused by human-aided dispersal, particularly with the movement of infested soil, mulch, and potted plants. Colonies that are already established spread to adjacent areas when one or more queens and a group of workers, frequently with brood, move from an existing colony to a new nest site to form a satellite colony. So far, the recommended controls are not as good as we would like them to be.

Mechanical control

One of the best means to reduce the impact of *Myrmica rubra* is to prevent its further spread. People should be aware of the risk involved in transporting materials from infested areas. Potted plants, soil, mulches, wood, and similar materials should not be transported to other areas without a thorough inspection. Ant activity can be hard to detect if the colony is small and underground, so careful observation is necessary.



This is a fire ant hard at work biting someone.

Cultural control

The main objective is to make the environment less hospitable for this ant. These ants require high humidity, moist soil, and shade. Reducing irrigation, mowing tall grasses and increasing sun exposure to the ground will decrease favourable nesting and foraging conditions for the ants. These ants build their nests under debris, including rocks, boards, logs, and anything that maintains a moist environment underneath. Reducing nesting sites will reduce the populations and force the ants to nest elsewhere. This method will not eliminate *Myrmica rubra*, but may help keep population densities low.

Chemical control

Chemical control should be used only as a last resort. Some chemicals can have unintended consequences, and quite often do not work as well as we are hoping. Currently, fair materials to use are the food bait-based insecticides. Low concentrations (2%) of boric acid mixed with a sugar attractant have been successful in the laboratory; however, results in the field have been inconsistent.

The active ingredient in the bait should be boric acid or Borax (Laundry soap). These active ingredients appear to damage the intestinal tract of the ants.

One or just a couple of baits will not suffice however. You need to aggressively bait. If you have placed what you might consider a ridiculous number of baits in the area you are on the right track.

The ants are difficult to get rid of because one colony with 1,000 workers can have as many as 20 queens and it's difficult to kill all of them.

Winged adults have not been seen in BC yet.

Please keep in mind that the worst you can do is ignore them. If left alone, these ants will keep on multiplying until your plot will be completely infested.

For more info check

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/invasive-species/fire_ants.htm

Garbage Pickup Increased to 3 Times per Week

Garbage pickup for the BARAGA dumpsters has been temporarily increased to three times per week due to the large amount of material being dumped as people clean up their plots.

Editorial

Carpeting is Not the Solution

-Heather Ewasew

In the past some gardeners have chosen to cover their pathways with used carpet as a weed barrier. Although this is effective temporarily, it can cause problems.

- If you've ever pulled old carpet out of a house, you know how dirty and stinky it can be. And that's indoors. Imagine how much mould and bacteria will grow in it if it's sitting outdoors. After a couple of years of rain and soil, the carpet gets pretty disgusting, not to mention being a health hazard.
- Synthetic carpet is made of petroleum products that have been treated with chemicals and cleaners that can leach into your soil. Do you really want to be feeding these chemicals to your children?
- Although the individual synthetic fibres decompose very slowly (it takes over 50 years), the carpet itself will fall apart and will be hard to remove. And if weeds do grow on top of your carpet, their roots will twine through the fibres, making them nearly impossible to pull.

For these reasons, carpeting is banned at the garden. If you have it on your plot or on the pathway you are responsible to maintain, please remove it. (But not to the BARAGA dumpster) This will also be part of our inspection list this year and for all future years.

Editorial

Don't be a Dumpster Dummy

- Andrea Tylczak

This spring we have had what seems like an ongoing problem with overloaded dumpsters and garbage piled all around the dumpster area. One of the reasons the dumpsters have been filling up so fast is that some gardeners are dumping the weeds and dead plants they pull up from their plots. Stop doing that! You should be composting the weeds and other vegetation! It's free fertilizer and helps build up your soil.

You can just dig a big hole and bury the stuff. Ramiro Coto reports that twelve inches deep is enough for most any weeds. Or you can get a composter; see the article in this issue of The Seedling to find out where you can get a composter at reduced price. Or, if you really insist on not doing your own composting, take the stuff to your city yard and let them compost it (see the same article for details). But don't fill up the BARAGA dumpsters with it!

And don't leave garbage around the dumpster area. It's unsightly and uncool. Member service hours are used up cleaning up after the dumpster dummies who leave trash around. That takes away from service hours that could be used on some other project that benefits all of us.

BARAGA Harassment Policy

BARAGA Directors have voted to make the following Harassment Policy part of the Handbook. Normally policy changes are made by a vote of the membership at annual meetings, but due to several incidents, the Directors felt

that we should adopt a Harassment Policy immediately.

CHAPTER 3 - Membership

3.3 HARASSMENT POLICY

At BARAGA, we are committed to providing a safe, secure, healthy and respectful environment for all members. No one may be harassed and no one has the right to harass anyone else, at the garden or in any situation related to this organization.

This policy is a step toward ensuring that our garden is a respectful and safe place for all, free from harassment.

Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment, behaviour or conduct against a member in the garden or any meeting place — a comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. BARAGA will not tolerate any acts of harassment, threats, intimidation, or abusive and disruptive behaviour by any stranger, family members, friends, or members against any other member.

There are different types of harassment. One type includes inappropriate conduct in any form about a person's:

- age, race;
- creed, religion;
- sex, sexual orientation;
- marital status, family status;
- disability;
- nationality, colour, ancestry or place of origin; and
- any other protected ground of discrimination under applicable human rights legislation.

A second type relates to what is sometimes referred to as "bullying" behaviour that may involve:

- Repeated humiliation or intimidation that adversely affects a member's dignity, psychological or physical well-being or integrity
- A single instance so serious that it has a lasting, harmful effect on a member.

Harassment may be written, verbal, physical, a gesture or display, or any combination of these. It may happen only once, but often happens repeatedly. This includes sexual harassment which means any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any person or that might reasonably be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on membership or on any opportunity at BARAGA.

Examples of sexual harassment are:

- A sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the person where the person making the solicitation or advance knows or ought reasonably to know that it is unwelcome; and
- A reprisal or a threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made or threatened by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the person.

Reasonable actions by board members or committee members to help manage, guide or direct other members in the work environment at BARAGA are not considered harassment. Appropriate performance recommendations, counseling or suggestions by another member is not considered harassment.

3.3.1 Member's Rights and Responsibilities

Members are entitled to be free of harassment at BARAGA. Members have the responsibility to treat each other with respect. We ask that any member who experiences harassment or sees another person being harassed reports it to the board of directors.

Members are responsible to co-operate in the investigation of a harassment complaint. Anyone who investigates or gives evidence in a complaint investigation is asked to keep details confidential until the investigation is complete. Members have the right to file a complaint and to request the assistance of a board member to resolve a complaint of harassment according to applicable regulations.

3.3.2 BARAGA Responsibilities

The board of directors at BARAGA must ensure, as much as possible, that no member is harassed in the BARAGA environment. The board of directors will take corrective action with anyone under their direction who harasses another person. BARAGA will not disclose the name of a complainant or an alleged harasser or the circumstances of the complaint to anyone except where disclosure is:

- necessary to investigate the complaint
- a part of taking corrective action
- required by law

The Harassment Policy at BARAGA does not discourage or prevent anyone from exercising their legal rights.

If you are a member or director and you become aware of harassment you must do everything in your power to stop it, whether or not a complaint is made.

Procedures Applying to Complaints of Harassment

If you are harassed, the first thing to do is tell the person harassing you to stop, if you feel comfortable doing that. You can do this in person or in writing. If you feel unable to deal with him or her directly, you may file a complaint with the board of directors. The complaint will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. When the investigation is complete, the investigator will provide a written report.

The person who filed the complaint and the harasser will be informed of any remedies or

disciplinary actions that may be shared upon conclusion of the investigation.

3.3.3 Corrective action for Harassers

Members who harass another person will be subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal from membership. If the investigation does not find evidence to support the complaint, no record will be kept on file of the incident. When the investigation finds harassment occurred, the incident and the corrective action will be recorded in the harasser's membership file.

3.3.4 Violence Policy

Canada's Criminal Code prohibits violence. You have a right to live and work without being subjected to violence. This policy outlines what to do if you are subjected to threats or violence at BARAGA or if you, as a member or director, become aware of a violent situation.

Violence is the attempted or actual exercise of physical force that could cause injury to a person and any threatening statement or behaviour that gives anyone reason to believe that physical force could be used against them or to cause injury.

This policy applies to all members, regardless of their position including, but not limited to, all visitors and contractors hired by BARAGA. A workplace includes any place where BARAGA's business occurs. The regulations for this policy are similar to the harassment policy above.

Community Work Hours Status

As of the beginning of May, seven BARAGA members (other than members of the Board of Directors) had completed their six-hour contribution to the maintenance of the community area of the garden site. That's less than 1% of all members. A further eight members had completed more than half their

contribution and an additional member had completed two hours.

Jean Webster, who is recording member's work hours, comments, "Those who were there for the April work party did a great job and though they worked hard, they enjoyed the process while working with other BARAGA members. It is a great way to meet and get to know other gardeners and to possibly share tips and solve problems they've run into on their own plots."

Members and Associates can sign up for work parties online; see the web site for the link. Members can also work on projects outside of regular work party hours; contact Claire Skolos to make arrangements (e-mail work.parties@baraga.ca or phone the BARAGA phone number and leave a message.) Lighter tasks are available for less physically strong members.

Make sure to report your community hours worked to Jean to ensure you are credited. Jean explains, "People can contact me to report their completed community work hours by e-mailing work.report@baraga.ca, by sending a letter to BARAGA, Box 209, 4974 Kingsway, Burnaby V5H 4M9, or by phoning me at (604) 986-8587." Be sure and include your name, plot number, the date you did the work, a description of the task, and the number of hours you worked.

BARAGA Bees Are Doing Well

Most of BARAGA's bee colonies survived the winter with no chemicals. (Some beekeepers use chemicals/medications to help control various bee pests and diseases. We don't use them on the BARAGA bees.)

Spring is the time when strong bee colonies reproduce. They do this by swarming. Rather than running risk of loss of bees to the trees in the form of swarming, our beekeeper is



splitting some colonies before they swarm.

The original Colony #5 has a very common brood disease, Chalk Brood. . (The "brood" is the developing bees.) The colony will be re-queened and divided to which should allow it to become healthy again.

- Colony #1 is in two deep boxes and is looking great. It may be able to be split later.
- Colony #2 is in two deep boxes and is looking even better. It may also be able to be split later.
- Colony #5 has been divided to form a new Colony #5 in a top bar box and the remaining original Colony (now Colony #3) in two deep boxes. Colony #3 will later be split into two single deep boxes to become Colonies #3 and #4.

BARAGA Web Site Continues to Improve

More information is being added to our web site (<http://baraga.ca>) every day. We now have a blog page, which has general information about what's going on as well as comments and opinion pieces from the Directors.

Members will find the following on the member's page:

- Minutes of Directors meetings
- A downloadable Structures Approval form
- A link to sign up for work parties
- A space for members' comments. (This space is only for general comments. For anything requiring a response, please send an e-mail to the Directors using the e-mail addresses on the "Contact Us" page.)

Subsidized Composters Available

Residents of Burnaby, New Westminster, and Vancouver can get subsidized composters from their city yards.

Burnaby Residents - Composters are available from the Burnaby Yard Waste Depot for \$30 each (includes tax). Rain barrels are available at \$70 each (including tax). The Yard Waste Depot is located at 4855 Still Creek Avenue (west of Douglas Road and north side of Still Creek Avenue) and is open 7 days per week (except Statutory Holidays) from 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Alternatively, residents can drop off up to 100 kg of yard waste per day free of charge (proof of residency required). The yard waste should not be bagged or bundled.

The Burnaby Recycling Information Line can be reached at 604-294-7972, Monday to Friday 7:00am to 3:30pm.

New Westminster Residents - New Westminster residents can get composters for \$30 at the City Works yard, 901 1st St. The Yard is open Monday to Friday 7:30 to 4:30. The New Westminster Recycling Depot, which is available for use by all New Westminster residents, accepts clean yard waste. It is located at Sixth Ave. & McBride Blvd., adjacent to the Canada Games Pool. It is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm. The phone number is 604-968-4208.

Vancouver residents - The City of Vancouver sells backyard compost bins for \$25 (taxes included), payable by credit card, debit card, cheque, or cash.

Pick up and pay for your garden composter at the Vancouver South Transfer Station at 377 West Kent Avenue North. The Transfer Station is open every day from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Approach the station from the east on Kent Avenue and use the weigh scale line up. Left turns are not allowed if you come from the west. Residents should bring a driver's license or a utility bill that shows your address. There is a limit of three composters per household.

Or, yard trimmings and wood waste can be dropped off at either the Vancouver Landfill, 5400 72nd Street, Delta or at the Vancouver South Transfer Station. The disposal fee is \$65.00 per tonne, with a minimum fee of \$6.00 for up to 90 kg.

Gardening Hint: *A tablespoon of vegetable oil poured into your rain barrel will keep the mosquito larvae down.*

BARAGA Gets Topic-Specific e-mail Addresses

BARAGA now has separate e-mail addresses for different topics. This was set up so that members would have faster responses; each e-mail goes directly to the director responsible for that area. Please see the web page (baraga.ca) for the list of e-mail addresses.

Dates to Remember

June 7, July 12, August 9, September 13: Work Parties

* 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.

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

Spot the Problems with this Plot and Win a \$25 GardenWorks Gift Certificate!

There are twelve things in this plot that do not comply with the BARAGA handbook, plus three things which, while not strictly against the rules, are discouraged. Can you spot them all? Send your answers to baraga.seedling@gmail.com or mail to BARAGA's post office box. Be sure to include your name and plot number. The winner will be drawn from among the entries that have the greatest number of correct answers at the July Board of Directors meeting, so be sure and get your response in before July 1! (Note: This cartoon is not intended to represent any actual BARAGA garden plot or member. Any resemblance between this cartoon and any actual plot or any actual member is purely coincidental.)

