



# The SEEDLING

Newsletter of the Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Association



## MANAGING OUR WATER

by Dick Mackin

The hot weather is on the way and we will be using lots of water to keep our plants healthy and thriving.  
Water smart!

### OUR SYSTEM

BARAGA gets its water from the city of Burnaby and we pay for this water at the current metered water rate. Water is the largest expense BARAGA has, so it is in the best interest of all gardeners to use our water wisely. Water is provided to all plots through underground pipes, above ground standpipes and taps. Each tap is for the use of the four plots closest to the tap. Attaching a permanent hose or modifying the water outlet is not permitted. A splitter is allowed so that two or more gardeners can access the water supply at the same time. The water is turned on around the 1st week of April each year and turned off at the end of October depending on the weather conditions.

### WATER LINE BREAKS

The most common reasons for breaks are:

- The wooden post that supports the standpipe breaks when knocked by a wheel barrow or an attached hose is pulled too hard. If the wooden post supporting your standpipe is rotten, replace it – or call us to get it replaced.
- The underground pipe is broken when a border support stake is driven through it. Some plot borders have crept forward and are now over top of the water pipe. This year we will be contacting members to adjust their borders if necessary.

### DRIPPING TAPS

With approximately 200 taps in our water system, dripping taps can result in a lot of wasted water. If you have a dripping tap, let us know and we will have it repaired or replaced.

### WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A BREAK IN THE WATER LINE

The main distribution line follows the path directly from the city line and goes all the way to the north path. There are six subsidiary water lines that go from the main line to the plots on the east side, and four that go to the plots on the west side of the main line. Each of these ten lines has a shut-off valve and each of these shut off valves is marked by a sign that identifies the line it controls.

Every plotholder should take the time to see where the shut-off valve for their line is located. Please visit the Members section of the BARAGA web site to view a map of the water lines and location of the shut-off valves.

If you see a break in the line, and water is flowing from the break, you should immediately turn off the water for that line. Once the water line has been turned off, you can then contact BARAGA directors and our groundskeeper who can arrange to have the problem corrected.

BARAGA Emergency Contacts:  
BARAGA Main Phone: 604-600-6939  
Dick Mackin, Vice President: 604-716-4664  
Matthew Kolsrud, Summer Groundskeeper: 778-987-1224  
Matthew's Work Hours: 8:30-12:00, Mon-Fri

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## Ryan's Rainbow Foodbank

With kale and rhubarb flourishing in our gardens, it is time to start thinking about donating to **Ryan's Rainbow Foodbank.**



Organizers at the foodbank report that the need for fresh produce is greater than ever. They are seeing a growing number of seniors who cannot make their budget stretch to the end of the month.

Please be generous and place your contribution in the white box located on the east edge of the main parking lot. The box is emptied by volunteers from Ryan's Rainbow every Monday morning after 10:00 a.m.

**Plot Inspection Dates: Jul 7, Aug 4, Sep 1, Oct 6, Nov 3**

**Work Parties: Jul 14, Aug 11, Sep 8, Oct 13**

**Board Meetings: Jul 11, Aug 8, Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 2**



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

by Sarah Gordon

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Summer is under way and we have had some great weather for growing so far. Coming up Aug 11 is our Annual Picnic, with the Best in Garden contest, fantastic food, and a fun time with your BARAGA neighbours. We look forward to seeing you all there!

## PRESIDENT'S OFFICE HOURS

July 7 and August 4, 10 am to 1 pm, the new President, Sarah, will be at the BARAGA office to answer general member questions and hear your comments. Please bring pictures of areas of the grounds or your plot that you wish to discuss as Sarah has a disability and is unable to roam the site as much as she would like. If you are new to BARAGA, Sarah can also help with gardening questions, including tips and techniques on tools, soils, fruit trees, and general horticulture.

## THE SGM JUNE 16

The SGM documents and comments are posted on the members page. Please take the time to read these, as the Handbook project is very important to BARAGA's future. At the meeting, we had quorum and some excellent, useful feedback. The contingency plan was approved by the required 75% majority of attendees. The contingency plan will only be activated if we can not complete the Handbook revisions before the November deadline. One of the good ideas proposed by Members at the meeting is to say which parts come from the City of Burnaby, local Bylaws or Acts; and which come just from BARAGA. We will try to incorporate this in the Handbook. This will give Members a clearer picture of why some of the Bylaws, Rules ad Policies are in the documents. There will be an informal consultation session held at the garden (we want to hear from you but also keep costs down). Watch for the bulletins and posting at the office announcing the date. Progress updates are coming but we need to do some more work yet. The SGM will be continued when all sections of the Handbook are ready for voting on. Look for more information on the SGM page of the website, baraga.ca. You can also still comment by email, directors@baraga.ca, and postal mail.

## SUMMER WORK PROJECTS

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers contributing their Community Service Hours. So far paths are being repaired, new picnic benches have been added, and the orchard is looking plump and delicious. The Board has received many positive comments from guests about the excellent work of Members.

## INVASIVE PLANTS

There are some plants that like to take over areas and ruin habitat for native species or create a weeding nightmare in your plot. At BARAGA, some of the common culprits are horsetail, morning glory, lamium, and knotweeds. Once they start to take hold, you will be forever trying to keep them controlled. If you're having a problem with these plants, as these species are often noted in inspection reports, let us know and we can work with you on solutions. Contact us at directors@baraga.ca.

The worst thing you can do with these species is to rototill them into your plot! Many of the roots just come apart to make hundreds of new plants. For horsetail, which like an acidic soil, try adding garden or dolomite lime to your worst areas. Lime is something many of us add to our gardens anyway, to keep the soil nutrients accessible to a wide range of plants. Keep pulling up morning glory, lamium and knotweeds. Eventually the root stores will be exhausted, and the plants will weaken.

Did you know those pretty yellow irises you see around BARAGA can clog the ditches and spread over your plot? Check out the Invasive species Council of Metro Vancouver page for them:

<http://bcinvasives.ca/iscmv.ca/index.php/invasives/detail/128>

There is very good information on invasive species throughout this website, including future invasive weed problems – so you can prevent them establishing in our area.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have participated in the work parties, repair the plumbing, maintain flower beds, serve on committees, and do all the jobs that make BARAGA better.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Picnic August 11!

## SO MUCH FUN TO BE HAD AT BARAGA'S ANNUAL PICNIC!

### Join us on Saturday, August 11th

for this popular potluck event with many delicious dishes to sample, lots of laughter to enjoy with your neighboring gardeners and show off your culinary skills by bringing a food item(s) made from BARAGA-grown produce to share with others.

**Location** - On the grassy area in front of the office at the Main Entrance parking lot.

**Contests** - Enter to win prizes in our contests in the following categories:

- Best vegetable
- Best canning
- Best flower arrangement
- Best fruit
- Best baking
- 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.

Choose a category and focus on growing the best produce and be prepared to submit and win the contest.

### 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

Bring your family and friends ... just ensure to bring extra food to feed all and extra chairs.



Come have some fun!!

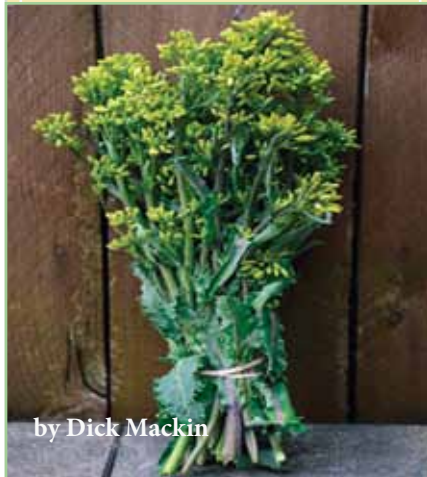
## Kale

### The Earliest Spring Vegetable

My favourite time to eat kale is April, when the plants left in the garden over the winter begin to grow again sending out new leaves and florets. These new leaves and florets are very tender and very sweet.

I like to graze on them while getting my garden ready in the spring as well as picking them for salads or stir frying at home. Not only are the florets delicious, the new leaves are also tender and tasty. If you keep the plant well picked it will continue to produce florets for several weeks. When you need the garden space for planting in May it is time to pull up the plants and add them to your compost.

If you have never tried these tasty morsels, you are missing one of the delights of a spring garden. So, this year when you are putting your garden to bed in the fall, leave some kale to over winter (it is very hardy and will survive most Burnaby winters) and harvest the spring bounty next year.



by Dick Mackin

### NUTRITIOUS KALE CHIPS RECIPE

Cut/break kale into bite size pieces. Wash and thoroughly dry kale with a salad spinner. Drizzle some olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning salt. Bake 10 - 15 minutes on low temperature until the edges brown but are not burnt.

Cool and enjoy yummy healthy crunchy chips!

Check out the internet for more delicious kale recipes!



## FERTILIZING YOUR PLANTS by David Tamblin

### NPK

#### NITROGEN, PHOSPHORUS, POTASSIUM

When buying fertilizer of any kind three numbers are normally displayed on the label. These refer to the principal nutrients - nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. For simplicity they are often referred to by their chemical symbols "N", "P" and "K" respectively. The numbers represent percentages of the nutrients in the mixture and available to plants in one year.

For example a common commercial fertilizer is 5-10-5 which means that it contains 5% nitrogen, 10% phosphorus and 5% potassium; the other 80% is filler. The numbers do not add up to 100% - that would be a killing strength - so most of the mixture is actually filler. Reading the label on the bag/container may reveal some of the filler contains other nutrients including some of the trace elements. In commercial fertilizer the three numbers often add up to more than 15. Organic fertilizers (composts, manures, etc.), seldom if ever reach that number. It does not mean they are less effective only that more may need to be applied. The reason we prefer to use organic fertilizers is that they build living soil while chemical fertilizers tend to degrade it over time.

Plants do not care where their nutrients originate, only that they are available in the quantity they require. It is a common human mistake to think that if something is good more of it is better. This does not work for fertilizers. Too much may actually damage the plant particularly the roots. Surplus nitrogen can leach into the soil and the run-off will contaminate waterways.

#### The three elements have their own qualities and usages:

"N" - Nitrogen is responsible for rapid plant growth and dark green leaves. Plants deficient in nitrogen may be pale, yellowish or stunted. Leafy crops (lettuce, spinach, etc.) benefit from a good nitrogen supply. Be cautious about when nitrogen is applied. Perennial plants stimulated with nitrogen late in the season will be tender and susceptible to winter damage. Nitrogen is volatile and needs yearly replacement.

"P" - Phosphorus is important for root growth, for plant sturdiness, for flower and fruit production. Plants without sufficient phosphorus may be stunted (due to poor root growth), have a very dark green or sometimes a purple cast. Bonemeal and rock phosphate are two good organic sources of phosphorus. Excess phosphorus can also be a source of contamination in run-off.

"K" - Potassium regulates plants' water retention and the formation of new cells. Plants lacking potassium may wilt in hot weather. The older leaves may yellow or brown, wither and fall off. Occasionally leaf edges turn red. Wood ash was once considered a good source, but compost and well-rotted manure are good substitutes.

Vegetable gardeners are constantly removing their crops; they need to also be replenishing the soil with the nutrients they remove. The obvious way to do this by composting everything possible and by adding manures to the soil periodically (actually best done in late fall so there is time for decomposition). Saving compostable food scraps, bagging grass clippings and gathering fall leaves are all cheap ways to feed the soil. Sometimes the nutrients can be supplemented by applying an organic fertilizer from a store; this is best done by scratching it into the top inch of soil and then watering. When plants are obviously in need of a nutrient supplement the fastest way to do this is to apply a foliar spray; a weak solution of a liquid fertilizer is sprayed on the leaves and the nutrients will be almost immediately available to the growing crop.

When starting with a previously uncultivated area, the nutrients might be low. But an allotment worked by competent gardeners for many years should be well supplied with nutrients. Nitrogen, while an abundant element is volatile and only produced naturally by a few plants - notably the legumes - so must be replaced yearly. On the other hand phosphorus and potassium only slowly become available, so adding them may sometimes be overkill. If there is a marked problem with crops a soil test will detect a nutrient deficiency. Testing is rarely necessary; careful observation and faithful renewal of the soil are usually enough to enjoy abundant crops year after year.

# Board of Directors

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**Vania Alexieva**  
**Mark Anderson**  
**Rolf Schrader**  
**Monica Jones**

## American Kestrels at BARAGA

So what's up with the elaborate nesting box on a high pole on the east side of the allotments facing the farm next door? Well, we're attempting to attract American Kestrels to breed here.

American Kestrels are North America's smallest falcon – diminutive “cousins” to the more famous and much faster Peregrine Falcon. However, what they may lack in relative speed they more than make up for in grace and beauty. In the Lower Mainland, American Kestrels are quite an uncommon bird, and in fact the only location outside of Burnaby where they are seen regularly is Colony Farm Regional Park in PoCo. However, we do have a breeding pair just south of BARAGA in the Big Bend area near North Fraser Way. This pair is using a nest box put up earlier this spring, and represents the only known nesting location in the Lower Mainland for this species.

You can check out the story of their breeding success last year at George Clulow's blog: <https://burnabybirdguy.wordpress.com/2017/07/18/kestrels-breeding-in-burnaby/>  
We're hoping to get a repeat here at BARAGA, attract a nesting pair, and double the local breeding population.



## Mailing Address

Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Association  
Box 209, 4974 Kingsway  
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M9

**Telephone:** (604) 600-6939



**Interested in learning to garden? Love to volunteer?**

**Come down to the allotment gardens in South Burnaby and learn with us.**

**Burnaby Neighbourhood House Education Plot at BARAGA**

**Come out for free workshop and learn about gardening.**

**Garden Class Dates (11 am to 1 pm):**

June 16 – Fairy Garden Day - Take Home a Free Fairy Garden.  
July 7 – Compost Three Ways  
July 21 – Winter Planting/Seed Starting  
Aug. 11 – Sprouting and Microgreens  
Aug. 25 – Fairy Garden Day –Take Home a Free Fairy Garden.



**Garden Work Days**

Come get your hands in the soil from 11 am to 1 pm. Work Days may be cancelled due to heavy rain.

Saturdays: June 2, July 7, Aug. 4, Sept. 1, Oct. 6  
Sundays: June 17, July 15, Aug. 19, Sept. 9, Oct. 21

Burnaby Neighbourhood House Education Plot at BARAGA  
7528 Meadow Avenue, Burnaby, PLOT 256  
[bnhcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:bnhcommunitygarden@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the garden.  
Special thanks to the following sponsors:  
☛ Choices, ☛ West Coast Seeds, ☛ Harvest Power, ☛ Cariboo Hill Secondary Woodworking Team,  
☛ and all our wonderful volunteers.

## Burnaby Neighborhood House Education Plot by Jaclyn

The education plot got underway early this year despite the wet weather. We were worried about the garlic, but most have pulled through and are producing huge scapes. The weeds have been tamed (mostly) and regular bi-monthly work days have been scheduled. One huge work day we weeded and put 13 wheelbarrow loads of woodchips on our main path. We planted carrots, radishes, parsnips, and spinach from seeds donated by West Coast Seeds and we have received a few donations of zucchini and tomatoes.

United Way contacted us with an offer from HSBC to come and help on a major project. Five wonderful volunteers braved the fire ants to weed and plant the greenhouse! We are looking for another group to come and build a new compost bin. As our main objective is education we are working on a program with two local schools to have field trips to the garden. We want more kids to come and see where their food comes from and maybe pick their first fresh fruit right from the earth. We are so happy to have teams of all ages come and help us as we could not maintain the plot without them.

We have received some funding from the small grants program and other sources to help fund major improvements and classes in the garden. The first class will be a fairy garden project with 8 kids from Taylor Park!

We will have classes on micro greens, seed starting, and composting in small spaces over the summer. All our classes are geared towards teaching new skills with the knowledge that not everyone has access to area to grow food or compost.

We are already looking to next year with more projects lined up. We would like to build a new trellis over the seating area to grow grapes and veggies over. We have five returning volunteers this year, and we welcome anyone that wants to join us to learn, volunteer, teach, or just chat about plants! It has been great to share our knowledge and learn from each other.

We welcome any garden member to come and share their knowledge with us too!  
Thank you to BARAGA for allowing us the use of this plot, this year will be our best yet.