

THE SEEDLING

*The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association
BARAGA, Volume 28, Number 1, April 2009*

Annual General Meeting

BARAGA's Annual General Meeting took place on January 10th in the Lion's Club Hall. Despite the frigid weather (and a broken furnace) many members turned out and braved conditions.

Don Hatch, president of BARAGA, chaired the meeting. He reported a generally successful year of gardening which was somewhat hampered by cool, wet weather. Volunteers are keeping the site well maintained by their efforts. Derrill Thompson (retiring VP) and many other volunteers have done lots of work over the past year.

Financially BARAGA's year came close to the budget projections and our reserves remain in good shape. No changes in fees were contemplated in the immediate future. Despite a wetter year, water remains a major expense. Another expense was bringing in soil for landscaping. BARAGA also suffered a major break-in and theft in fall. Although the deductible is \$500 there is insurance for replacing the lost tools, etc. and enhancing our security will be major concerns in the coming year. For members leaving the garden late: please ensure the last

person out closes the gate.

Thanks to the work of Jonathon Candy BARAGA now has its own website. Members can visit the site at www.baraga.ca. There is a collection of photos from past events, some old newsletters and the BARAGA handbook among other information. Despite problems our bees continue to make honey. Although first foiled by rain, the Picnic Committee staged another popular event this year.

Several members expressed interest in starting a seed exchange. This would feature seeds saved by BARAGA gardeners and highlight heritage and open-pollinated varieties. Donated plants and unused seeds could also be exchanged. (See announcement below.)

The election changed a few faces. Janet Filippelli became vice-president. Three new directors were elected: Majid Abdul, Patricia Kavanagh and Bella Scholz. Derrill Thompson and Roman Bobrownik retired after several years of excellent service on the board.

Board News and Views

BARAGA Handbook: All BARAGA members should have a copy of the handbook in their possession. Unfortunately many do not. The last edition was distributed in 2007-8 but some members still haven't picked up their copies. The handbook will be available at the BARAGA office on site, most Saturday mornings when there are work parties or any time you see the office door open. The Handbook is also available on the BARAGA web site. You may download and print your own copy. If you do please send us a note via support@baraga.ca and tell us so that we can take your name off the list of those who still need a copy.

Succession & Subletting: Plot turnovers continues to be a nagging problem. In part this is due to the high demand for allotments; it also arises from misunderstandings of the policies and bylaws. The following points should be noted:

- ◆ The board is constrained by the lease agreement with the City of Burnaby to rent to Burnaby residents on a preferential basis.
- ◆ The board proposes to change the succession policy (see below). This policy will be submitted to the 2010 AGM for members to vote on.
- ◆ Subletting of plots is prohibited and may result in any parties engaging in this practice losing their allotments. This does not prevent gardeners from involving their family and friends in their allotments, but that is only an informal arrangement.
- ◆ If the succession policy is changed it will be imperative that A family member or co-gardener are properly registered on the

"Rental Agreement" mailed at year end.

- ◆ The board will consider possible measures to reduce the length of the waiting list.

Pesticides: gardeners are reminded that the City of Burnaby has established which pesticides can be used in the city. A list was published in a previous newsletter and it is posted at BARAGA. The city has published a handout describing the intent of the bylaw, a listing of the pesticides still permitted, those no longer allowed and other useful information for gardeners. Readers should note that only Diatomaceous Earth and Ferric Phosphate are acceptable controls for slugs.

Work Parties: they will be held on various Saturday mornings throughout the growing season. If you wish to take part just show up if you see the sign out at the parking lot entrance. There will also be occasions when the phone tree members will contact you for a work party. Please be courteous to them as they are your fellow gardeners and if they leave you a message please respond as soon as you can.



Big Trouble Ahead - Purple Deadnettle flourishes on this member's allotment.

Proposed Plot Succession Policy: The PLOT SUCCESSION PORTION of Chapter 5 of the Handbook would be replaced with a new section, PLOT VACANCY AND SUCCESSION POLICY, to read as follows:

In the event of a vacancy occurring, the following will apply:

1. If a member dies, the spouse is entitled to garden that plot until the end of the year. The spouse regardless of city of residence may succeed to the plot if s/he wishes provided s/he does not rent another plot.
2. A gardener sharing a plot who has gardened for at least three preceding years (evidenced by paying \$10 associate membership fee annually and being named on the lease during the period) and is a resident of Burnaby may succeed.
3. All other vacancies will be filled from the established waiting list.

Purple Deadnettle Season The Weed that is Taking Over BARAGA

One of the most aggressive weeds at the garden is now growing vigorously and seeding prolifically.

Now is the time to take action to limit the spread of this pest plant. Purple Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*) is easy to recognize; it has the square stems of the mint family, flourishes in cool weather. Its purple-red flowers are an attraction to bees who find few other flower blossoms at this time of year. So it gets pollinated and seeds in abundance. The seeds are easily distributed and the plant spreads from garden to garden, colonizing ditches and even grassy areas as it spreads.

Unfortunately the seeds can lie dormant in the soil for years and then germinate in fall when the competition for space is minimal. Deadnettle must be uprooted and completely removed from the ground to eliminate it; plants merely pulled and left will readily re-root themselves and carry on with seed production.

While the board and many frustrated gardeners would like to see this weed eliminated it will be a battle for several years. If a garden has as much as a single plant, NOW is the time to take action to prevent it setting seeds.

Plant a Row/Grow a Row

Once again BARAGA gardeners are invited to support the Plant a Row project. In troubled economic times lots of people are forced to turn to the Food Bank. Last year as many as 700 people lined up each week. Undoubtedly the number is growing. Consider that the only fresh vegetables and fruit some people eat are those that come from the Plant a Row contributions. It leaves no doubt that contributions from BARAGA gardeners that are collected and delivered by our volunteer committee throughout the summer is a valuable addition to many people's diets. BARAGA allotments can produce quite abundantly in the hands of expert gardeners. Please consider giving some of your surplus to this worthwhile endeavour.

Bee News Update

by Ann Talbot & Don Hatch

◆ How are the BARAGA bees doing?

It's been a long winter so news of our bees is mixed. At the time of this writing (April 4th) we have lost one colony, have one weak colony and three relatively strong colonies coming out of the winter. Remarkable when you think of how cold it was and how long it's been!

Our intrepid beekeeper Dick Gould has done a great job of keeping our bees healthy. He has kept up with the latest treatments for the control of Varroa/Tracheal mites and has even been able to get our frames "lonized" – an environmentally friendly treatment for the elimination of Foulbrood and Chalkbrood bacteria and fungus. Normally, the only way to kill off this fungus is to burn all of the frames as the spores are incredibly contagious and take years and years to die off.

◆ Can I have my own bees at BARAGA?

The City of Burnaby now allows residential homeowners to keep bees on their property. There are a variety of restrictions that go along with this by-law. So, considering that the city has allowed bee keeping, BARAGA has decided to adopt a policy on bee keeping.

BARAGA will not, for any reason, allow individual beekeeping on individual plots nor on any other location at BARAGA other than at our own bee hives. Basically, there are two main reasons not to allow individual beekeeping:

1. You can't ensure that neighbouring plot members will feel comfortable or safe having bees in the plot next to them.
2. You can't ensure that individual

beekeepers will follow good beekeeping practices such as disease and mite control that could jeopardize the health of the BARAGA bee hives.

In the meantime, if you are interested in keeping bees, an option would be Mason bees. You can buy Mason bees at the Honey Bee Center and for more information on Mason beekeeping, check out these websites:

<http://www.honeybeecentre.com>

<http://www.wingsinflight.com/gardbees.html>

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens/>

◆ How can I attract Bees to my garden?

1. First and foremost, DON'T use pesticides! DUH!
2. Native plants are four times more attractive to bees than exotic flowers, heirloom varieties of herbs and perennials can also provide good foraging.
3. Choose a variety of colors and shapes of flowers. Flower colors bees like are blue, purple, violet, white, and yellow.
4. Plant flowers in clumps in order to attract more pollinators than individual plants scattered through the garden.
5. Have a diversity of plants flowering through spring, summer, and fall, to support a range of bee species that fly at different times of the season.

6. Bees prefer sunny spots and need some shelter from strong winds.



The BARAGA hives

Seed Exchange Bank

Organic farming with heirloom seeds has been practised from generation to generation. This is our heritage and a challenge for us, today's home gardeners, to preserve the organically grown seeds and produce, tasty nutritious and chemical free crops. Interest in heirloom seeds and organically grown plants is the drive behind establishing a BARAGA Seed Exchange Bank for the benefit of BARAGA gardeners. The BARAGA Seed Exchange Bank is growing from the seed itself and can only expand with the help of our participating gardeners.

Seed Collection: We ask BARAGA gardeners who have been using heirloom seeds to contribute any amount of seeds, big or small to the BARAGA seed bank. This will benefit BARAGA gardeners in two ways; providing a source of heirloom seeds (some of them rare) now and preserving these seed strains for future gardeners. Although our drive is for heirloom seeds, gardeners who are using and have excess leftover of bought F1 hybrid or OP (open pollinated) type seeds are urged to contribute them (in the original package if possible) to exchange with other gardeners needing seed. Please bring any saved seeds to the BARAGA Seed Bank and inspect the growing collection! Gardeners can contribute seeds at any time at the seed drop-in box located outside the BARAGA office building. Place dried seeds in a clearly marked package, indicating the Name of Plant, Origin of Seed, Date/Place of Collection, and other details. The BARAGA seed exchange committee will check the drop box periodically and safely store the seed

contributions for future planting. Once the seed bank has enough seeds, gardeners may access seeds from the bank (in kind exchange).

Exchange Update - April 6, 2009: We have a growing collection of seeds in our "seed bank" (both saved from 2008 plants and store-bought seed packs) thanks to interested gardeners who have attended the early spring BARAGA seed exchanges. Our goal is to plant some of each type of seed we've collected so far and collect more seeds later this summer for next year's planting. If you need seeds or seedlings for your spring garden planting and/or have seeds to contribute, please attend one of the upcoming seed exchanges: Saturday April 18, May 2, May 16, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM at the garden office. Otherwise contribute anytime; put seeds in the white drop box by BARAGA office and put excess seedlings on the picnic table (please label). Outside of the above times, put dried seeds in the seed drop box and place any excess seedlings, bulbs, root crops (seed potatoes) that you wish to give away to other gardeners on the picnic table near the BARAGA office.

Want to know more about heirloom seeds? Here are some references: Seeds of Diversity Canada: <http://www.seeds.ca>; BC Seeds: <http://bcseeds.org>; the West Coast Seeds catalogue (some free copies available at the office).

- BARAGA Seed Exchange Committee

Expanding Horizons: Ideas for Flower Borders

BARAGA Bylaw 70(2) states "The first two feet (nearest to the main pathway) of each plot shall be planted in flowers to enhance the appearance of the site." Occasionally gardeners find this a restriction on their productivity, even though it only involves forty square feet (a mere 4% of the total area). There are ways to comply with the bylaw and still use the garden space very productively.

1. Plant things that are both decorative and a crop at the same time. Those colourful winter kales and equally bright Swiss chard are surely as handsome as many flowers and longer lasting. Then there are a number of flowers that are perfectly acceptable edibles. Johnny-jump-ups (a wild pansy that self-seeds abundantly provides a startling addition to salads. Other edible flowers are borage and comfrey, both rather coarse plants, but can qualify as ornamentals. A real dandy is nasturtium; not only do they grow prolifically but both the flowers and leaves are tasty (somewhat peppery) edibles. Some red leaved veggies (amaranth, red mustard greens (actually purple), basil, etc.) fit in well with flower companions.

2. Herbs are often decorative as well as useful plants. Already noted above were basil, borage and comfrey, but there are many others that belong in flower beds. Chives bare purple-pink flowers and thrive at BARAGA. Several types of lavender belong in a flower

border. West Coast Seeds sells two types of bergamot (lemon and wild) that are both aromatic and ornamental. Purple sage and variegated oregano are often found in flower beds, but are really culinary herbs as well.

3. As a backdrop to the flower border consider planting a row of Scarlet Runner Beans. While the beans are rather coarse eating they have eye catching flowers; from a timely planting there is usually a good harvest of dried beans - useful additions to chilli or soups. Another good backdrop is a row of sweet peas. While not edible, they provide a prolific source of cut flowers, both delicately coloured and sweet smelling. Legumes, such as these, are nitrogen fixers and improve the soil fertility.

4. Sweet peas and many other plants are useful as soil improving plants. They increase the amount of available nitrogen in the soil. Other decorative plants can be profitably added to the compost pile. While some might not want the blue flowers of borage in their salad, they will find borage adds both nitrogen and potassium to the compost. Bees go into overdrive harvesting from comfrey flowers, but comfrey also offers the same nutrients as borage in the compost pile.

A somewhat neglected plant, Poached-Egg Plant (*Limnanthes douglasii*), has many uses. It forms a mat of colourful flowers which attracts many bees. It tends to suppress weed growth. A native of Oregon and California, at a pinch it might count as a native plant. When it is killed by hard frost it can be dug in as a nutritious green manure.

It also self-seeds, so will likely be back next year without any effort.



Dahlias, much favoured at the allotments for colour and cutting.

5. One of the best natural defences against predatory insects is mixing things up. Flowers such as marigolds (*Tagetes* spp.) or chives are known to be

deterrents to insects. Using such flowers is a means of adding variety, deterrence and beauty all at once. Another option in controlling insect pests is to grow some plants that attract insects. The theory is that the insects will find these plants first and eat them leaving more important crops alone. If you like this strategy you might consider a portion of the flower bed as sacrificial plants.

This is only a beginning of the many useful additions that a small flower border can make to a working vegetable garden. To cover the subject fully would fill a book, but hopefully there are some suggestions here to make your flower border a worthwhile addition and not just a chore.

Plant Bargains

Everyone likes a good buy, particularly most gardeners in spring. Some of the best buys are right at our doorstep - the small operations along Marine Drive and the immediate vicinity; these often offer healthy plants at the lowest prices.

Mandeville (the nearby GardenWorks outlet) offers reductions to BARAGA members who present their cards; this is best done with a sales clerk before purchase; once established in their system gardeners can claim a price reduction when they present their purchases at the cash register. The best reduction is on Customer Appreciation Day, the third Thursday of each month, when the reduction is 15%.

Another way to find a bargain is at a plant sale. Be sure to arrive early in the day and expect line-ups; that's the only way to beat the crowd and get the best buys; healthy plants at half their regular price is a considerable incentive.

◆ BRAGS: Sunday, April 19th at Burnaby Village Parking lot from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

◆ VanDusen Garden: Sunday, April 26th, at VanDusen Botanical Garden from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

◆ NWHS: Sunday, May 3rd, at Ecole Glenbrook Middle School Gymnasium (8th Ave. & McBride) from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
Onion Parsnip Sweet Corn	Parsley Salsify	Asparagus Beans Carrots Leek Peas	Beetroot Cabbage Cauliflower Fennel Lettuce Peppers Pumpkin Tomatoes	Broccoli Brussels sprouts Celery Chinese cabbage Cucumber Kale Kohlrabi Radish Spinach Squash Turnip Zucchini

This chart indicates how long vegetable seeds are usually viable if stored in dry, low temperature, conditions. Some may be successfully stored longer than indicated, but a test is often advisable with old seed. When buying seed packages, you may sometimes find a date; usually it pays to clearly mark the month and year of purchase yourself.

Info About BARAGA

◆◆◆◆ The BARAGA mailing address is:
Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens
Association
Box 209, 141- 4200 McKay Avenue,
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4M9

◆◆ Contact phone number for plot rental or getting on the wait list is 604-842-8571. Please note that the waiting time for a plot is now about two years.

◆◆ To contact the president Don Hatch call 604-433-8055 and leave a message please. You may also e-mail us at - support@baraga.ca

Directors for 2009

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This newsletter was edited by David Tamblin. Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of BARAGA.

