

# THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association  
BARAGA, Volume 30, Number 2, July 2011

## 2011 BARAGA Picnic

The BARAGA Social Event of the year is without doubt the Annual Picnic, now a well established tradition. This year it will be on Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 P.M. It is held near the main entrance and parking lot. The picnic is a great chance to meet fellow gardeners, enjoy some good food and drink (some of it ethnic and unique), and usually a day to party in the great outdoors.

**Who Is Invited:** All members are welcome, so are their children and their guests. You may bring your friends or members of your family.

To help with preparation it is helpful to know how many to expect, so please sign up on the sheet at the office.

**Make a Contribution:**

Please bring a contribution to the potluck dinner. It can be an appetizer, salad, casserole, or other main dish, or a dessert. If uncertain how much,

enough for five is plenty. We often get and especially welcome ethnic treats.

**What to Bring for Yourself:** Remember to bring your beer or wine, whatever you prefer to drink. BARAGA has some picnic tables, but can always use more tables. Extra chairs, either folding or plastic garden chairs, are always needed.

**BARAGA's Contribution:** BARAGA will provide plates and cutlery (the disposable kind); also BARAGA traditionally supplies the coffee, tea and soft drinks.

**The Garden Contest:** the garden contest is an on-going feature of the afternoon's fun. Bring your flowers, vegetables, fruits grown at BARAGA to the competition and display.

Valuable prizes will be awarded in several categories.

**Games and Music:** for other entertainment remember to bring your garden games, bocce ball is popular. If you play an instrument this is a good chance to strut your talent after the dinner and contest.



Wet and Cool 2011 - good peas - Eleni Harvalias

Nota Bene: the following is from the Minutes of the 2011 AGM

### **Handbook Changes**

(1) MOTION: Don Hatch, *subject to amendment*, approving inserting in Chapter 11, *Plot Maintenance*, following the paragraph entitled, "Cultivation of Plots", the following:

Trees on Plots

- ◆ Planting of non fruit bearing trees on members plots is prohibited.
- ◆ Fruit bearing trees are limited to seven feet in height and must be placed in such a position as to not overhang any pathway at any time or shade another plot from May to October.
- ◆ All existing non fruit bearing trees and shrubs over seven (7) feet in height on a members plot are to be trimmed back to seven feet when dormant or must be removed by January 1, 2012.

The original Motion was carried.

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### **Board Announcements**

**Water Hoses:** Please do not leave your water hoses lying on pathways between allotments. Hoses are a tripping hazard.

**Parking Space at East Gate:** The area outside the east gate has been cleaned up. We want to keep it that way and use the space created for additional parking. Dispose of waste material from your garden by composting plant material, putting old lumber in 4' lengths and other refuse in the bins provided by the west entrance. In consideration of the European Fire Ant, it is important to not dump your compost near the bins at the front parking lot.

**Wheelbarrows:** BARAGA owns a number of wheelbarrows for the use of gardeners; after use they are to be returned to the side of the office building for other members to use.

**Donations for the Food Bank:** BARAGA has traditionally supported the Plant a Row/Grow a Row organization. This is a continent wide organization of gardeners who support their local food bank with donations. For many people it is their sole source of garden fresh food. BARAGA members have been generous with their donations over the years. When you have a surplus in your harvesting this is a good way to deal with it.

The donations may be delivered to Plant a Row on Sunday morning between 9:30 and 10:30 A.M. at St. Thomas More, corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Donations are stored in a refrigerated unit until they are delivered to the Food Bank for distribution. We are looking for volunteers to make the food bank deliveries from BARAGA; this is a good way to get in your volunteer hours. (Steve Vegh and Isobel MacDonald who did this for years have retired to Vancouver Island.) If you are interested in volunteering contact Don or Eleni, see back page contact info.

### **Plot 256 The Education Garden**

The Education Garden has made it's first Food Bank delivery to Maywood Community School. Thanks to some plot holders donations of seedlings, and the efforts of others with weeding, staking tomatoes, and even getting a hummingbird feeder up. Stop on by to get some great looks at these fascinating birds. If you are looking for some volunteer hours, there is no shortage of work. There are tools in the greenhouse, as well as a journal to record your thoughts and work done.

## **Myrmica rubra:**

### **European Red Fire Ant**

By Eleni Harvalias

BARAGA has the dubious distinction of having the first record of the European Red Fire Ant (along with Deep Cove) west of Ontario and North of Seattle. This ant was first introduced in Massachusetts in 1908. The leading authority in BC (Rob Higgins) has positively identified them, taken samples from several plots and will be contacting Agriculture Canada.

They are mainly red in colour, with slightly darker pigmentation on the head. The ants live under stones, fallen trees, and in soil. They are aggressive ants, often attacking rather than running away, and are equipped with a stinger. People who are sensitive or allergic to bee and wasp stings can have bad reactions (my arm was swollen from my wrist to elbow and I had to have a tetanus shot).

They are very common in Europe and live in meadows and gardens. They live on a diet of honeydew excreted by aphids, and, being very aggressive like to eat many types of insect and other invertebrates. They will attack any creature that disturbs their nest.

We are not sure how widespread they are at the garden, but they have been seen in at least 20 plots mostly in the NW area of BARAGA. What we need to do is to establish how many plots have them then work on trying to control them. We are asking all members to check their gardens, especially along the borders near wood (they like heat) as well as in the grass paths. We do have 2 species of black ants that are harmless so be sure that these are red. There is a map of the

allotments by the Office. We ask you to put an "X" on your plot if you believe you have them. They are more active when it's hot.

When we know the extent of distribution we will work on control. Rob Higgins suggests a solution of 1% Borax, 60% sugar and the balance of water be used. Cotton balls soaked in the solution, put into small containers and distributed in several spots around the edge of your garden will attract the foragers who will take them back to their queens. They prefer sugar to protein (eg peanut butter).

For now, be sure that you are checking the plants you share with other gardeners and veggies you take home. If you are sensitive or allergic to bee and wasp stings, keep an anti-histamine (like Benadryl) or your epipen with you. Wear clothing that will prevent them from getting to your skin (like gators).

For further information, including images on how to make the ant bait, go to:

Research WebPage:

[www.tru.ca/faculty/rhiggins](http://www.tru.ca/faculty/rhiggins)

BC Ants on AntWeb

<http://www.antweb.org/britishcolumbia.jsp>

Post Script: since I've written this article, the board has met and I believe the way we will go is to advise the members that we have the ant poison and those who wish to set traps can get in touch with us to get the materials. Hopefully members will read the web sites given. There is a really good web site from the University of Maine on the management of the European Fire Ant.

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## **News from the BARAGA Seed Exchange (June 2011)**

The BARAGA seed collection is growing and we need your help to maintain it. Seeds are alive and must be planted out periodically to sustain the species.

We invite you to take samples of seeds from the BARAGA collection (or from some other source), plant them in your garden, and then in summer/fall collect new seeds from your crop and return a sample to the BARAGA collection. The more people growing a particular type of seed in their garden and the more samples we have, the more confident we can be that the seeds in the BARAGA collection are viable.

You may have noticed the **\*\*new\*\***

**Seed Exchange Kiosk** beside the BARAGA bulletin board near the main parking lot and BARAGA office.

Inside the new seed kiosk you will find:

- ◆ a convenient seed drop-in box to contribute seeds at any time for the BARAGA seed collection maintained by the BARAGA seed committee. (we check the box periodically + sort & store donated seeds at one of our homes to keep the seed collection dry & cool)
- ◆ a seed information board to post seed-related articles, posters, ideas, seed trading notices, and pictures for the interest of seed-saving gardeners (feel free to expand on to the main BARAGA bulletin board if your posting is too big to fit)
- ◆ a shelf with plastic rain cover to put bulbs, seedlings, extra transplants, etc. for informal exchange (please take and plant what you can use in your garden and contribute some seeds

or other in-kind plant contribution from your own garden)

The seed exchange kiosk was built and installed by the seed exchange group at our spring seed exchange May 14, 2011. The BARAGA seed collection was on display with our new portable seed display panel (easier to browse than the cardboard boxes we used for storing seeds).

Thanks to those who attended our spring seed exchange event, chatted with us about seeds, and contributed some seeds and/or took a seed packet from the BARAGA collection. Unfortunately the May 7 original date for our seed exchange was rained out, and many of you may have missed seeing our notices on signs posted around the garden for the May 14 event. We have been speaking with BARAGA board, and we may have a tent shelter for next event at the garden.

### **Future events:**

We post notices of upcoming seed exchange events on signs around the garden and also on the BARAGA website "Events and the Seed Exchange" <http://baraga.ca/events.htm>. The next seed exchange event will be in the spring of 2012.

If you have ideas for other seed exchange events or want to help out please leave a note in the seed kiosk drop-in box.

We are looking for a speaker to talk about seed biology and seed saving for a seed exchange seminar at the garden. If you know someone or would like to volunteer yourself, please contact us.

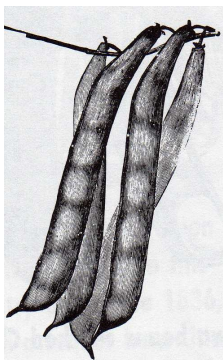
- BARAGA Seed Committee

## Gifts from the New World

Not the least of the discoveries made by Christopher Columbus and the many other intrepid explorers of the New World, was the discovery of several vegetables until then unknown to the rest of the world.

Famously the pilgrims who arrived in New England found gardens in which beans(1), corn(3) and squashes(5) grew side by side. Francis Drake is reputed to have passed on potatoes(4) to his compatriot, Walter Raleigh, who grew them on his estate in Ireland. The spicy black pepper which was often valued equivalent to gold found a hot rival in members of the capsicum family(2). Tomatoes(6) which today are preferred by four out of five as their favourite home garden vegetable, got a slow and hostile initial reception on the world stage. Together these six introductions undoubtedly revolutionized the European culinary world. They also rapidly spread to the rest of humanity.

**1. Beans:** which are supposed to have all originated from *Phaseolus vulgaris* were



already developed into several varieties in the Americas. Their use had spread from tropical mountain country in central America all over the Americas. The beans from Peru were introduced to Europe as Lima beans - no surprise there! Many new varieties were bred; while the

original habit as a climbing vine with stringy pods has been replaced by tender beans grown in bush form, the need for tropical heat to get best production remains.

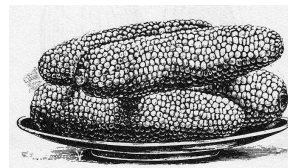
**2. Capsicum species** - Peppers: several species of capsicum can be found growing wild in South America today. Seeds from sites inhabited 7000 BC were found, but it is unclear if they were cultivated or merely collected. The hot varieties were probably first on the scene but fat, juicy bell peppers were also cultivated. Both forms were quickly introduced



into many traditions following their initial importation. They succeed wherever there is a season of lengthy, hot days. Pepper pungency is expressed in Scoville heat units; the sweet bell is 0, jalapenos are 2500 units, Tabascos are 60,000 plus.

**3. Corn:** the origin of corn is steeped in controversy. It certainly originated in Mexico and its use had spread both north and south before Columbus

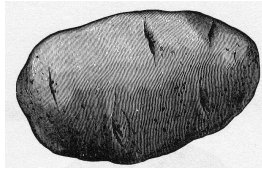
discovered corn fields in the West Indies on his second voyage. Within two



generations its use was global (the Chinese emperor was taxing its importation). Exactly which plant was bred, by who and when is still disputed: there is no doubt about its usefulness. Corn by-products are found in a host of manufactured products from cardboard boxes to chewing gum, from whiskey to ethanol. It is a staple of many people of the world.

**4. Potatoes:** are another of the major staple foods of the world. But they were unknown outside their home turf - the Andes - five hundred years ago. Potatoes started to spread

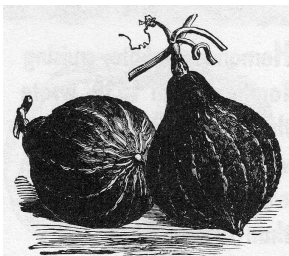
following the conquest of the Inca empire. Probably first cultivated in Spain they quickly



spread, soon reaching Russia and India. Because they are exceptionally easy to grow they quickly became popular in

poorer countries, famously Ireland and Scotland. The well known potato famine in the late eighteenth century had the effect of much cross breeding to eliminate susceptibility to blight and increase hardiness.

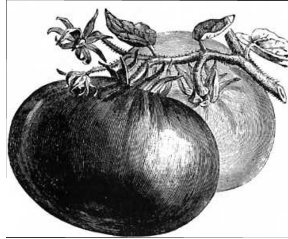
**5. Squash:** this is a vague term, meaning different things to different people. What we are talking about here is the cucurbits which originally consisted of six species all growing in North or South America. Along with corn and beans this formed the staples of pre-Columbian diet. From these cucurbits we



derive such vegetables as zucchini and other summer squashes, pumpkins, and a vast variety of winter squash. In modern cultivation spaghetti squash, pattypan,

hubbards, uchiki, turk's turban and a host of others have come into being.

**6. Tomatoes:** considering their popularity today, tomatoes took a long time to catch on. While they were quickly introduced into Spain and Italy they did not appeal in northern Europe. The problem was the resemblance to other species in the Solanum family, some of which are deadly poisonous. The French buried their fear by calling them "Pomme d'Amour" - Love Apples. Over the years they have become increasingly popular and are



now essential members of many national cuisines. Although many varieties have been developed the tastiest and best remain those varieties for home

gardens.

These six new vegetable groups are not the only new introductions that followed the discovery of the New World of North and South America. There are others, but these vastly expanded possibilities of the world's diet. Some visitors to the Americas realised the value of the new plants; others, Columbus among them, were disappointed gold seekers. The new vegetables were arguably the most important things introduced to Europe and far beyond. Even if Columbus Day is relatively unimportant to many of us in 2011, gardeners can still appreciate how our horizons were broadened by the discoveries five hundred years ago.

Today it is hard to imagine what a visit to the supermarket would be like if none of these vegetables were available. What would we be growing in our gardens if there were no potatoes, corn, squash, beans, etc.? Without peppers or tomatoes, how bland would our diet be?



Raised beds in the Yin/Yang pattern - Eleni Harvalias

## Country Wines

True wine is made from grapes. Some of the gardeners at BARAGA grow their own grapes and make their own wine. However, even if you do not have the grapes, it is still possible to make some very pleasant wines from the products at hand in the garden. Such wines are usually known as "country wines" and can be produced from many kinds of fruits and berries, flowers and even vegetables.

The basic process in making wine is introducing yeast to a fruit preparation sometimes called a "must". The yeast is a living organism which converts the sugar in the mix into alcohol and carbon dioxide. The recipe that produces the "must" is the basic flavouring of the wine. In addition the process requires cleanliness, favourable temperatures and plenty of time - translated as patience from the wine maker. Some basic equipment is required but much of it can be improvised in most households if only a small wine making operation is involved.

As with most processes some learning is necessary. A book with tried and true recipes, that explains the procedure in logical steps, can be very helpful. So can a friend who has already made his/her own wines and is willing to share their experience. As an introduction I will describe the basic steps in making rhubarb wine.

About six pounds of rhubarb is cut into short lengths and crushed; a clean crock and a sterile hunk of two-by-four will do the trick. This is covered by a gallon of cold tap water, covered and left for three days except for occasional stirring. The juice is strained off the pulp into a fermentation vessel; (this could be an old time one gallon wine jug.) The juice

of two lemons, three and a half pounds of sugar and a package of wine yeast are added. A fermentation lock is fitted and the mix is left to ferment for several weeks. At first it bubbles furiously, then slows down until it appears nothing is happening. A small container of the juice, kept on hand, can be used to top up the maturing wine. When the wine clears it is racked (syphoned into a fresh container). In a few more weeks the wine is bottled.

The process requires cleanliness at all stages to avoid contamination. This recipe calls for a Campden tablet - sulphur dioxide in a convenient form. It also suggests using a precipitated chalk (one ounce) to remove some of the oxalic acid that is naturally present in rhubarb.

While a much more sophisticated process and elaborate equipment will reduce the chance factor and lead to a more consistent product, these simple steps can be used in successfully making wines at home. The recipe will be slightly different for each kind of wine and until you are experienced it is best to have a recipe.

While fruit or berry wines are considered first by most people several allotment garden products can be used in wine making. Raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, currents are grown by many. You can easily find wild blackberries; they are free and make an excellent wine. Carrots and parsnip wine recipes are available. You can find elderberry flowers, dandelion flowers, even young stinging nettles free for the picking and all of them can be used as the basis of a country wine.

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Contemplating the fruit of an early harvest - Eleni Harvalias

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## Not Too Late to Plant

Many gardeners quit planting at this time of the year and sit back to enjoy the fruit of their labour. Who can blame them, but for the ambitious there is still plenty of time for growth in 2011.

Plants need light and some warmth, how much depends on what they are. By the time the dark days of winter roll in growth is finished and the hardiest ones sit until more favourable conditions come.

This means gardeners can still plant two kinds of crops. They can grow plants that mature in a short period of time and hence will be ready to harvest before winter. Radish, lettuce, arugula, cilantro, corn salad, spinach, cauliflower and broccoli (from transplants) will succeed. Secondly there are a number of crops that are hardy enough to readily overwinter and reach maturity next year. Varieties of winter cabbage, winter leeks, kale can be planted now. Garlic cloves can be planted when the weather cools and harvested next year. Onions from seed started now will grow quickly next year.

## 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

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◆◆ To get Approval for the construction of  
greenhouses and sheds (or when making  
repairs) phone Don Hatch 604-433-8055.

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◆◆ 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

◆◆ Problems with the BARAGA water systems  
should be reported as soon as possible. Water  
is a very expensive item on the list of  
expenditures. Waste should be avoided.

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### BARAGA Board for 2011

President: Don Hatch 604-433-8055  
604-312-3003

Vice-President: Eleni Harvalias 604-438-6529

Secretary: John Florek 604-526-4710

Treasurer: Joyce Wishart 604-412-3890

### Directors at Large

Luigi Aiello 604-721-7705

Terry Copeland 604-434-7167

Dick Goold 604-395-2901

Liliana Hoogland 604-657-4550

Bob Horsfall 604-524-5546

Patricia Spanner 604-315-6066

Sharon Thomson 604-525-1615

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This newsletter was edited by David Tamblin  
(unsigned articles are written by him). Views  
expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily  
those of BARAGA.