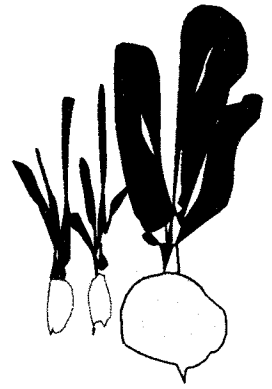


# NAGANEWS

Nepean Allotment Garden Association Bulletin

Spring, 2003



## NOTICE:

**The Annual General Meeting of the  
Nepean Allotment Garden Association  
will take place on Thursday, April 17, 2003  
at 7:30  
Nepean Sportsplex, Hall E  
1701 Woodroffe Avenue**

*As a tribute to the many years of volunteer service **Ian Reid** has given to our association, we will be serving coffee and cake following the business meeting. Please join us.*

*I would like to congratulate all those gardeners who helped us have an exceptionally good gardening year in 2002. We continued to operate at full capacity with 50+ on our waiting list.*

*As you know, our Maintenance Director, Ian Reid, has retired after 12 years. We will miss his efforts in organizing garden activities; however, we will see him daily at Viewmount as he tends his plots. We now have a serious void in our organization. As there is no apparent successor, we will all be called upon to do a little extra in order to fill his very large shoes. Please take the time to complete the bottom of your registration form to indicate where you can help out. Terry Ingratta will be co-ordinating the volunteer activities.*

*If you have any suggestions for agenda items for the Annual General Meeting to be held on 27 April, please call me at 723-0320.*

**Bill Nye, Chairman**

## YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIR:** Bill Nye 723-0320

**VICE-CHAIR:** Denis St-Jean  
224-9169

**CITY LIAISON:**  
Nancy Rooyakkers  
580-2424 ext. 41231

**TREASURER:** Biba Torlakovic  
596-6785

**REGISTRAR:** Mary St-Jean  
224-9169

**SECRETARY:** Elizabeth Nye  
723-0320

**MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR:** Vacant  
**DIRECTOR:** David Nott 224-8867

**DIRECTOR:** Terry Ingratta  
225-8082

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Denis St-Jean

"The Book of Life begins with a man and a woman in a garden."

--Oscar Wilde

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

For more than a dozen years, members of our association have contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to make us the envy of other gardening clubs in the area. When you receive your application form, there will also be a form outlining some of the jobs that need to be done every year to "keep the train on the tracks".

Please give serious consideration to donating a few hours of your time. Without volunteers like you our association would quickly go out of existence.

Some of the jobs will require just a day or so at the beginning or the end of the season. Others will take a few hours now and then during the Summer. All of them are enjoyable. Whether you are a woman or a man, there is always something you can do for your association.

Please complete the volunteer portion of your application form and indicate what categories interest you.

If you wish more information, call volunteer coordinator Terry Ingratta. Her telephone number can be found on the first page of this newsletter.

ⓂOF SPECIAL NOTE: We are looking for someone to fill the position of maintenance director, which has become vacant. The position entails overseeing and coordinating such duties as staking plots, grass cutting, equipment maintenance, water supply, and miscellaneous other chores. The maintenance director is a voting member of the board of directors. Anyone interested in obtaining more information is asked to call Bill Nye, at 723-0320.

## RED RIBBON GARDENS

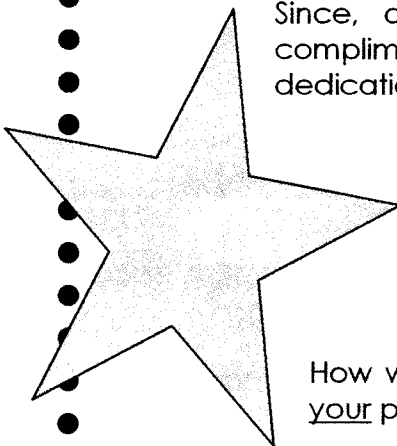
Get set to show off your green thumb! We are launching this season an event that we hope will become a regular feature in the years to come.

Since, as you know, our gardens continue to be the subject of many compliments from the public, it has been decided that your efforts and dedication should be officially recognized.

During the peak of the season -- sometime in late July or early August -- we will invite an independent expert to award ribbons for our most outstanding gardens. There will be several categories such as "Best Maintained", "Most Unique", "Best Tomatoes", etc., for annual and perennial gardens alike.

How would you like to have a red, blue or white ribbon displayed in front of your pride and joy? Well, now is the time to make plans. It should be great fun.

Keep an eye on the bulletin board (located on the main parking lot shed) for further information!



## IMPROVING YOUR SOIL

It is a mistake to assume that our vegetable plot needs heavier feeding than a flowerbed. Most vegetables need only a moderate amount of nutrients. On the other hand, the soil must be properly conditioned if you want to obtain a healthy crop.

Adding chemical fertilizer to the soil may give a quick boost to your tomatoes, but it adds no bulk to the soil. If the ground is heavy – a common occurrence in this area – it will remain that way unless you work in some organic material every year.

Clay soil is often very fertile, but its particles are extremely fine and tend to bind together, making drainage slow and excluding air.

To open the soil and encourage a healthy root system, you should cultivate it by adding coarse materials such as compost, well-rotted manure (not green manure, which is too acidic and can damage roots), grass clippings (very effective) or last year's leaves.

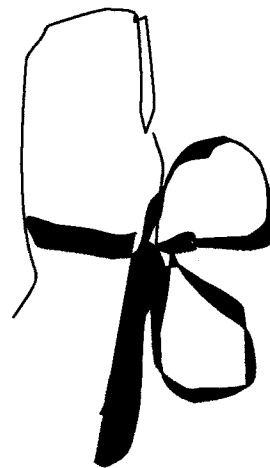
Spread the material evenly over the surface of your garden, ideally to a depth of at least 2.5 cm, then work it well into the soil with a spade or fork. Keep checking the garden for any stubborn patches that refuse to drain properly, and either dig a small ditch next to that spot or raise the soil level a little. You can try to carefully add more coarse material around the plants if the roots are not disturbed.

The soil in our allotment gardens tends to be slightly alkaline, making essential nutrients less available to plants. Acid soil on the other hand reduces the presence of microorganisms and may become toxic to some vegetables. The best way to determine what type of soil you have is to

test it. There are many inexpensive soil-testing kits available at garden centres. Follow the instructions carefully. This will mean taking small soil samples from different spots in your garden at a depth of about 13 cm (5") and mixing them together before making the test. Results can, theoretically, give a pH reading ranging from 0 (very acid) to 14 (very alkaline), but you won't get anywhere near those readings. The ideal pH is 6.5 to 7.0, or neutral.

A common way to reduce alkalinity in the soil is to add sulphur or peat. If the ground is too acidic, it will require limestone. A good test kit will tell you how much conditioner to add to your garden.

Finally, organic mulch will ensure better temperature control in the garden, while helping to retain life-giving moisture and cutting down weed growth. Spread straw, hay or grass clippings around the plants and on the overall surface of the garden after the vegetables have appeared above ground.



DON ' T  
FORGE

Return  
applicati  
on forms  
by 30  
April

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## START OF A NEW SEASON

Although we aim to officially open the gardens for planting on May 15th, the actual start date can vary, depending on soil conditions. Arrangements are made every Spring, after the ground is thawed, to have the annual plots machine plowed in preparation for planting. Over the years, the gardens have sometimes been ready before or after that date.

How can you tell if it is time to plant? Look for the stakes showing the plot numbers. These are put in place after the plowing is done. It is up to you to check for this periodically. Perennial plots, for obvious reasons, are not machine plowed and can be worked at your leisure.

## KEEPING THE BUGS AT BAY

Here are three ways to protect your precious crops from harmful insects:

- **Insecticidal soap**, a solution of two tablespoons of dishwashing liquid in a gallon of water will control aphids, red spider mites, whitefly and scale insects. Spray the tops and undersides of the leaves.
- **Diatomaceous earth**, also known as fossil flour. This powder, made from the skeletons of microscopic sea creatures, is very effective against all sorts of beetles, cutworms, leafhoppers, slugs and mites. It is safe for humans and other animals, and can be purchased at garden centres.
- **Marigolds**. When interplanted with tomatoes, peppers, strawberries or potatoes, marigolds will help discourage, and eventually destroy, nematodes which attack these plants. The flower slowly releases a chemical substance that is toxic to the bugs. The results won't be dramatic the first season, but the effect is cumulative if you plant some every year.

### AN IMPORTANT DEADLINE

Every year a growing number of new gardeners file their names with our registrar, hoping to use one of our plots during the coming season. As at this printing, there are more than 50 names on our list. It has always been our policy to give current gardeners right of refusal before making a plot available to someone on the waiting list.

Since the 2002 season, to be fair to everyone, we have set a firm deadline for renewal of gardening privileges. Again this year, if we have not received full payment for your plot(s) by **Wednesday, April 30**, we will assume that you do not wish to renew your application and will allocate your plot(s) to another person. This date is firm. There will be no exceptions, and no telephone reminders will be made.

