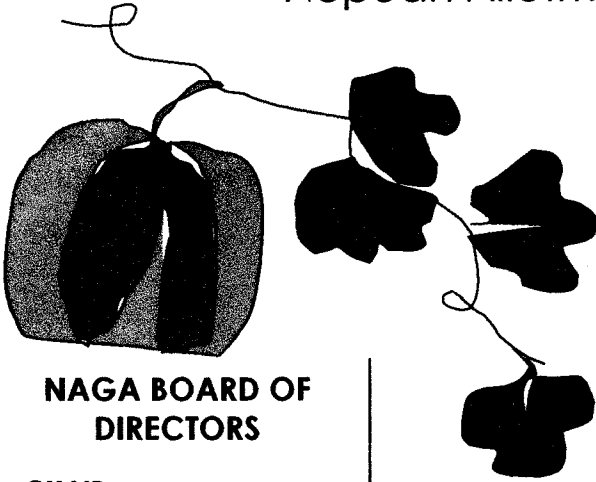


# NAGANEWS

Nepean Allotment Garden Association Bulletin

Spring 2004



## **NAGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Bill Nye 723-0320

### **VICE-CHAIR:**

Denis St-Jean  
224-9169

### **CITY LIAISON:**

Nancy Rooyakkers  
580-2424 ext. 41231

### **TREASURER:** vacant

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224-9169

### **SECRETARY:**

Elizabeth Nye  
723-0320

### **MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR/VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:**

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225-8082

### **DIRECTOR:**

David Nott  
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### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**

Denis St-Jean

### **LAYOUT:**

Elizabeth Nye

## **NOTICE:**

**The Annual General Meeting of the  
Nepean Allotment Garden Association  
will take place on Tuesday, April 13, 2004  
at 7:00**

**Ben Franklin Place, Room 1A  
101 Centrepointe Drive**

*Dear Gardeners,*

*In that very few gardeners attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the NAGA executive uses this newsletter to communicate with you about garden activities and to apprise you of major issues to be discussed at the AGM, and to tell gardeners what the executive has done in the past year. The newsletter is a lot of work and the Editor, Denis St-Jean, and Elizabeth Nye deserve credit for an excellent product at a very modest cost to the association.*

*The number of garden lockers was increased from 10 to 20 by having two gardeners share each locker. Allocation is on a needs basis with those using public transportation or with a physical disability having priority. My thanks to those locker users who cheerfully agreed to share their space.*

*Last year we had serious problems with our riding mower and the Executive is looking into the purchase of a new one. We will have information ready for the AGM. Read the article, "Grass Cutting" for more details.*

*The City of Ottawa is finally looking at the role of community gardens and allotment gardens in the community and I have been a member of the Garden Steering Group doing some of the groundwork for a city policy. Please see the article "Community Gardening in Ottawa."*

*The number of garden plots at the Nepean Allotment Gardens has more than doubled since 1991 and we still have a waiting list of 38 people who were not assigned gardens in 2003. The allocation of additional plots will be strictly in order from the waiting list. Present members wishing additional plots must put their name on the waiting list. Gardeners are allowed the equivalent of 2 annual plots--1200 sq. ft. Beginning this year, each gardener will be limited to two perennial plots due to the limited number available (72).*

*Happy gardening and I hope to see you at the meeting on April 13.*

*Bill Nye, Chairman*

## 2003 GARDEN COMPETITION

There was an enthusiastic response to our first Annual Garden Competition last summer. Board members reported that gardeners regularly approached them with questions and comments about the contest, and said they were looking forward to the results. Well, here they are, with remarks from the judge Mary Reid, who kindly donated hours of her valuable time walking around the entire area, taking notes.

### -- The Winners --

**Best Maintained Garden:** #19, Hasim Lizolovic

*"Avid bean collectors at work--and evidence of previous hard work on weeding, general maintenance and harvesting."*

**Most Unique Garden:** #143, Ron and Catherine Rogers

*"In the midst of a multitude of veggie patches--a delightful selection of annuals, lots that could be used for cutting--a delight in the garden and on the table at home."*

**Best Planned Garden:** #125, Lorenzo Abalos

*"A very well thought out plot--with fences and gates--yet still pleasing to the eye--quite colourful."*

**Best Crop Variety:** #163, Héène Labbé

*"Very creative mix and wide selection including lots of spices and herbs, as well as veggies--and lots of the same variety, too, such as tomatoes of all kinds--and a dollop of flowering plants."*

**Judge's Choice (a tie):** #14, Alfons Bach. *"World's tallest sunflowers"*

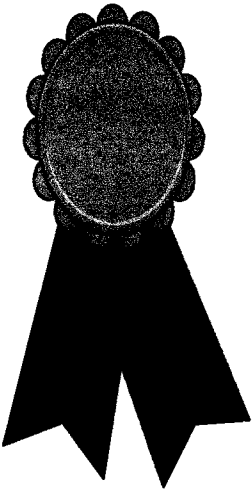
#58, Steven and Patricia Avery.

*"Quite the variety of Gladioli."*

**Best Perennial Garden:** This category was eliminated because Mary found most plots contained more annual crops than perennial ones.

Owner of the **Green Thumb Garden Centre**, Mary Reid is well qualified to judge our contest. In addition to running the Centre, she teaches a number of evening courses on horticulture at local high schools. We hope to have her judge our contest again this summer. Look for more information about our **Second Annual Garden Competition** on the notice board on the west side of the locker shed this summer. As well, we will post updates on the water posts located throughout the garden.

*A colourful gem tucked in behind busy Merivale Road, the Green Thumb Garden Centre is well worth a visit when planning your garden this year. You will find everything you need, including vegetable seeds and seedlings, berry and fruit plants, and growing supplies of all kinds. The Centre is located at 14 Norice Street. Go west on Meadowlands Drive from Merivale, turn south on Perry Street, then east on Norice. Norice also runs east off Woodroffe Avenue. Mary Reid is the friendly owner of this independently-owned business.*

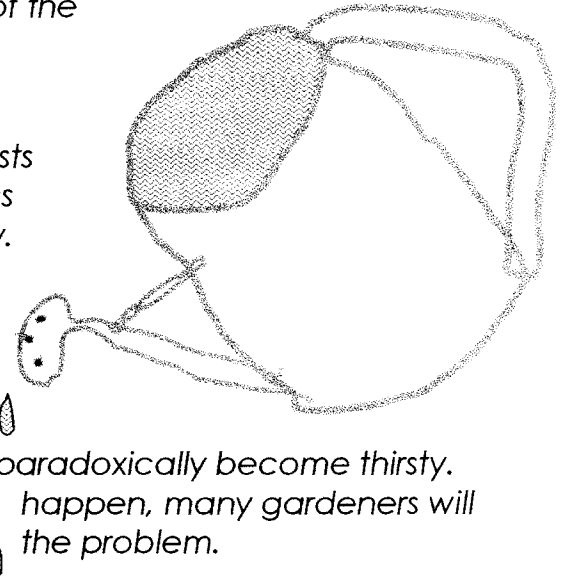


## **EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WATERING**

In the "good old days", we rarely gave a second thought to our water supply. "There are more lakes in Ontario than in the rest of the world combined," we were told. "We'll never run out."

We now know that isn't true. Frequent and wide-spread droughts, environmental concerns, and much higher costs have brought home the fact that, like any other precious resource, water must be conserved and used effectively.

Last year, an article in the Lee Valley catalogue pointed out that over-watering can be just as damaging to crops as under-watering. If roots and stems are damaged by too much watering, they lose their ability to take up water efficiently and paradoxically become thirsty. Leaves wilt and fruit becomes wrinkled. Seeing that happen, many gardeners will grab their hose and drench the plants, compounding the problem.



**One inch, or 2.5cm, of water a couple of times a week** in the heat of summer is all that is needed to keep your plants healthy. Don't try to pour the entire amount on at once; apply half of it over the whole garden, then go over it a second time. This will give the water time to percolate into the ground. And remember that the best time to water is in the early morning.

### **FREE COMPOST AGAIN THIS YEAR**

Last year, as a result of a financial surplus, we decided to make available, free of charge to our members, a couple of truckloads of compost. Within hours, the great heaps had dwindled to a few grains, and the lucky gardeners who obtained some were happily working it into their soil.

This year, we will double the amount of compost for you to use! It will not be possible for us to give advance notification of delivery of the compost, so keep your eyes open, not long after the official opening of the Gardens, for the tell-tale black mounds. A limited number of wheelbarrows and shovels will be provided; the loan of any additional ones would be appreciated.

### **GRASS CUTTING**

Last year our riding mower was under repair for most of the summer (cost +\$600.00). It is 10 years old and in need of replacement. The roughness of the ground and the shock of hitting numerous stones have taken their toll. In September, the machine suffered additional serious damage (cracked housing spindle after hitting a rock) and will be costly to repair. It is estimated that \$2500.00 is needed for a new riding mower

On a happier note, Ian Reid has indicated that this year he will look after the grass, and Terry will again co-ordinate those who volunteer to cut grass as required. We need volunteers willing to operate either the riding and/or push mowers or whippersnapper.

Please give Terry a call--225-8082.

## **BRASSICAS - THE GRUMPY VEGGIES**

Cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale. If any plants deserve the reputation for being "touchy", they're the ones. Your tomatoes, your beans, even your peppers and corn can be doing fine, but look toward your brassicas and they seem to have sprouted radio antennas. No wonder many gardeners have given up trying to grow those pesky plants.

Being aware of what causes a crop failure can help in avoiding the frustration most of us have experienced when attempting to grow members of that family. Here are a few hints:

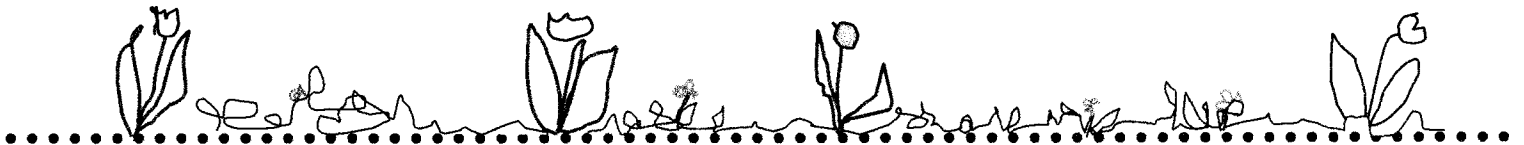
If young plants undergo stress at the fifth or sixth leaf stage, they will lose their shape and start to develop loose, pointed heads. This is known as "bolting", and can make plants practically inedible.

Severe over-watering or excess fertilizer will often cause bolting. Uneven or crusty ground can also contribute to the problem. Open pollinated strains are more susceptible to

stress than many hybrids. Direct seeded plants tend to bolt more frequently, too. And seed borne diseases can be a major headache. So can too much heat.

Seed dealers, of course, have been aware of the problem for many years, and reputable firms now demand laboratory certificates from their suppliers. The certificates outline the status of each new seed lot. There are many contributing factors which can affect seed quality -- contaminated seedling beds, neighboring crops that carry disease, use of old and unsterilized foam trays, failure to rotate crops from year to year, and neglecting to clean cultivating equipment.

If you're going to be adventurous this year and plan to grow brassicas, be prepared. Make sure that your seeds are of good quality, plant early, cultivate well, remember that such plants don't like a lot of fertilizer, and don't over-water.



## **COMMUNITY GARDENING IN OTTAWA**

The City of Ottawa is conducting a review of community gardening in Ottawa to look at both existing gardens and the criteria for developing new community gardens. They have formed an inter-department steering group and a steering group representing community gardeners and two city staff. As NAGA Chairman, I am a member.

The community garden steering group has looked at all of the support the existing 19 community gardens now receive from the City. In short, the support varies dramatically. Another criterion being studied is the ownership of the land on which the garden is situated. Some are on NCC land, some the City of Ottawa, and some private. Of course, all of the benefits of community gardens on the community are being stressed. The report should go before the Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee in April 2004.

The study will set guidelines for support of community gardens in Ottawa. This will be positive for NAGA allowing long term planning without worry. For example, in the future will we be charged or not charged for things like water? At present there is no citywide written policy. We will keep you posted on developments.

## **FROM THE REGISTRAR**

Last year, all of our garden plots were rented. We have 121 annual plots (30' X 20' or 9 X 6 m.) and 72 perennial plots (15' X 20' or 3 X 4.5 m.) and despite this, many people on the waiting list did not get gardens last year. There are 38 people on the waiting list so far and as the weather gets warmer, there will be many more.

### **REMEMBER!**

These are some of the terms and conditions of your license:

1. Hand **watering** ONLY is allowed ---NO sprinklers. The cost of water is included in your fee, but please don't waste it. If you see anyone washing their car with our water, please get their license plate number and phone one of the directors immediately.
2. **Rocks** are to be put in the rock pile near the shed.
3. **Weeds** are to be put in the wooden compost bins.
4. **Garbage:** Plastic bags, plastic flats, coffee cups, soft drink cans, luncheon remains, dirty diapers, plastic bags of dirt, plastic plant markers, gum and candy wrappers, etc. are to go into the garbage cans in front of the lockers. If we all clean up our own garbage, then we won't have to get volunteers to do it.
5. Only **organic herbicides, fungicides and insecticides** are allowed.
6. **NO** stepping on anyone else's garden, even if it looks abandoned. If weeds from a neighbour's garden are a problem, please call 225-8082

### **UNTENDED PLOTS**

In 2003, there were fewer than six plots that became weed filled or were abandoned—a huge improvement over previous years. Each gardener was asked to rid the plots of weeds.

One gardener had been ill but did clear out the weeds after notification and will receive a renewal notice. Three plots had been allotted to new gardeners who apparently were not up to the challenge and will not be sent a renewal. One gardener had been notified the previous year, and will not be sent a renewal.

**Please take care of your garden patch. It not only results in better crops, but also makes for good neighbours.**

### **DON'T FORGET YOUR DEADLINE**

**If the registrar has not RECEIVED your renewal form and payment by *Friday, April 30, 2004*, your plot will be allocated to another gardener. That date is firm. If you have any questions, please call Mary at 224-9169.**

### *Is anyone interested in organizing a plant exchange?*

We had one several years ago which everyone enjoyed very much. It was fun to swap and to grow new and different plants. Call Terry--225-8082.

## ***VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR***

The Board of Directors wish to thank, on behalf of all our gardeners, the unstinting efforts of **Georgina** and **Doug Galway** and **Marcia Robertson**, for turning the contents of our previously wretched compost bins into viable and useful material for us to use. And all of that without the convenience of an automobile!

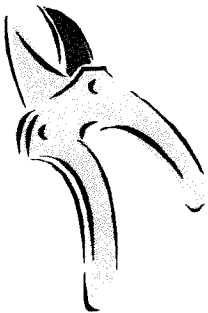
We also want to thank the dozens of other unsung volunteers who picked up debris, mowed the grass, painted, planted and pulled up plot markers, repaired faucets, fixed our old cantankerous riding mower, planted flowers at the main entrance, removed rocks from the pathways, and in general made our Gardens the envy of all the other communities.

**Please become a volunteer. Call 225-8082**

### ***GOOD EARTH by Doug Galway***

This year Doug Galway and his family will be taking care of emptying the six small compost bins into the larger compost area near the storage shed. They will also be maintaining these bins and "mining" good earth in the large area and in the bins.

Neon red tape on a stake in a compost bin section means that the earth is ready for use. Please help yourself to this good earth. Sometimes composted earth is piled in the grassways near plots. Look for a "Free Compost" sign. Please use these piles as well. Wheelbarrows can be requested from people with keys to the storage shed. Gardeners can also fill pails to place good earth carefully near growing plants.



**COMPOST BINS ARE NOT FOR GARBAGE!** Compost bins are for plant material only with stems that are not thick and woody. All corn and sunflower stalks, raspberry canes, and other thick woody plant growth like tree branches must be cut into three foot lengths, tied in bundles with twine, and placed beside the City of Ottawa garbage cans in the main parking lot. Also, please ensure your plants do not grow against or over the compost bins.

*Invest in a pair of  
secateurs. The  
more you cut up  
your plant  
material, the faster  
it composts*

**Composting is giving back to the earth what the earth's bounty has given to you. Join us in keeping this property beautiful and clean throughout the growing season.**

*Soil texture is important to the success or failure of your crop. For information on determining the texture of your soil, see "How's Your Soil Texture?" at [www.finegardening.com](http://www.finegardening.com)*