

ARCHIVE

NAGANEWS

Nepean Allotment Garden Association Bulletin

Fall 2006



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Vacant position

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Denis St-Jean

Chairman's message—Increase in rates coming?

Volunteers: *We need someone to be nominated as Vice Chairman at our spring Annual General Meeting with the view of being Chairman the following year (2008) as I will have completed 10 years in that position. In many aspects, this year was most discouraging for members of your Board of Directors especially after the extensive vandalism to our sheds this fall. We are desperately in need of new people to come forward to contribute ideas and manpower to our organization. We plan to expand the Board from seven members to ten members to help ease the burden and to address the major areas of concern: staking, grass cutting, weed control and compost. Phone me or email me if you have any ideas or if you wish to put your name forward to be a Director.*

Rate Increases: *The Board has discussed the increase of fees by \$10 for every gardener, with a rebate of the same amount for volunteer service. Another consideration is to raise the fees by \$5 per plot to pay for grass cutting. This will be determined at the AGM in April.*

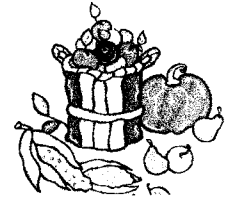
Fenced Gardens: *A number of gardeners have a preference for fenced gardens, but they are becoming a problem for other gardeners. Issues of safety have been presented to the Board as well as blockage of sun and the neglect of weeds between the fences and the boundaries. A proposal will be put to the AGM to allow 3' mesh fences at the boundaries for the purpose of ground hog control. Any fence above 3' is to be placed 2 feet inside the boundaries only.*

New Projects: *Two major projects face us in the spring: the re-construction of the sheds and lockers; and the beautification of the west end of the gardens. Please read the articles on pages 3 and 4.*

The gardens will not operate without your help.

ALL THOSE EXTRA VEGETABLES ...by Mary St-Jean

Did you know that **green peppers** can be frozen for use over the winter in stews, sauces and salsas? Just wash and pat them dry, cut off the stems and remove all seeds and membranes. Cut into halves, slices or rings and pack them in freezer bags, then freeze.



Tomatoes, too, can be frozen for later use in salsas and sauces. Freeze them whole after washing and drying them, remove the stems and put into freezer bags. They can also be cut in half, spread on a cookie sheet and frozen, then packed in freezer bags. There is no need to remove the skins as they come off quite easily when the tomatoes are slightly thawed. Tomato halves can be grilled or fried from frozen.

Overripe or damaged tomatoes can be used to make purees or sauces. Cut them up roughly, remove any bad parts (can be skinned or not), stew gently with a little salt, pepper and sugar, herbs such as bay leaf and marjoram, for ten or fifteen minutes. Blend as is and pack, or simmer until mixture is thick. Adjust the seasoning to taste, cool and pack in rigid containers, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch (1 to 2 centimeters) head space, seal and freeze.

A WINTER PROJECT

Winter is a good time to plan next summer's garden. When you have decided what you will grow, go to your stationer and buy a pad of standard graph paper. With a pen, make a scale outline of your garden. We find that allowing three $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch squares per foot of garden space is ideal. Each square then represents four inches.

Decide where you will place each crop; then using a pencil, indicate them on the plan. The rows should run east-west, with the taller crops on the north side of your garden. That way, they won't shade the smaller plants. But remember your neighbour. Keep extra-tall plants like corn at least three feet from the edge of your plot. His or her plants also need sunlight!

Experienced gardeners and farmers annually rotate their crops to keep soil-borne diseases and fungi in check. Don't plant the same crop in the same location year after year. This can also apply to plants of the same family, like broccoli and cauliflower. Pick up a good gardening book and find out what crops are best suited to one another in the garden, or ask your seed and plant supplier for advice.

THE SPICE OF LIFE

Well, not spice, exactly, but herbs. Many of us gardeners grow them each year in annual or perennial plots. The trouble is, there is often too much left over after we've made our casseroles and stews. Here are two more uses for your surplus:

Herb vinegars: place herbs in a jar or bottle and cover with white vinegar. Secure with a tight lid and store in a cool, dry place for 4 to 6 weeks. Pour into smaller bottles.

Herb mustard: mix 8 tablespoons of dry mustard, 8 tablespoons of salt, one teaspoon of sugar, and just enough vinegar to make a smooth paste. Divide into four portions and mix in one tablespoonful of a favorite herb in each. Store in airtight containers.

VANDALS CAUSE MAJOR DAMAGE

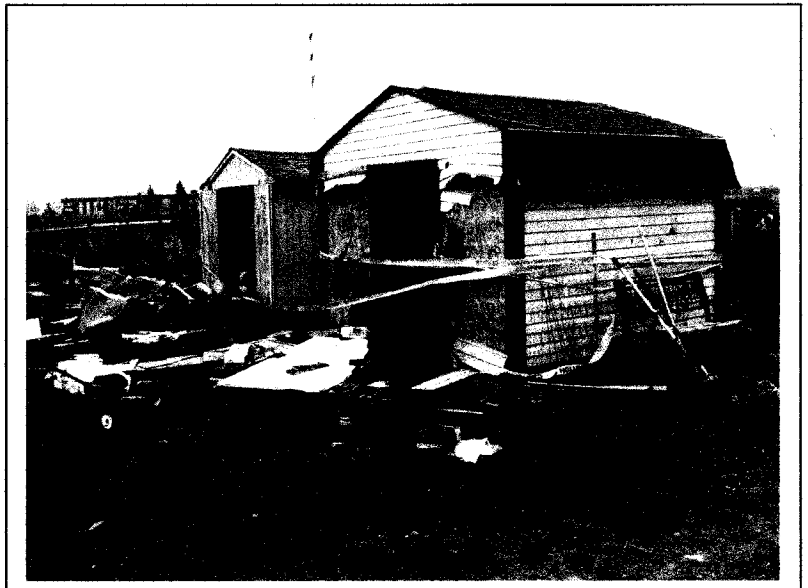
A group of young rowdies caused thousands of dollars of damage to our two sheds and equipment in October and November.

It started around the middle of October when a gardener spotted some boys jumping on the shed roofs. He chased them away. A few days later, the boys were caught doing the same thing.

On the night of October 26th, the doors to the main shed were ripped off and push mowers, tools, containers and other materials were thrown out on the grass. We returned the equipment to the shed and nailed up a temporary barricade. Overnight on November 4th, the vandals came again, this time inflicting major structural damage on both sheds, pouring engine oil on the floors and on the seat and cowl of the riding mower, and again strewing equipment and tools around the property. One of our park benches was also destroyed, and a locker was broken into.

At this writing, the Ottawa police were investigating the incidents. We hope that it will result in some action.

On a happy note, as a result of an article that appeared in the Ottawa Sun, a group of good Samaritans in Greely, Ontario volunteered to help us rebuild our sheds. They even drove to Nepean to inspect the damage. It's nice to know that there are kindhearted people in our midst.



PLUMBING HANDYMAN NEEDED

We are in need of someone with knowledge of basic plumbing to take responsibility for minor maintenance of our water system. The flow to the garden sites must be turned on at the main each spring, and shut off and drained in the fall. There may also be an occasional faucet leak to be fixed. All major problems with the system are dealt with by City of Ottawa crews. Anyone willing to donate a bit of his or her time by taking on this responsibility is asked to call Terry Ingratta at 613-225-8082.

GREEN PARTNERSHIP PILOT PROJECT

At the 2006 Annual General Meeting, the membership voted in favour of the Board applying for a grant from the City of Ottawa's *Green Partnership Program* to improve the appearance and safety of the wooded property at the west end of Viewmount Gardens.

The aim of the project is: 1) to turn the dumping grounds into a park setting with shade trees, benches and picnic tables for gardeners and local residents; 2) add two annual gardens and up to 10 perennial gardens which will help decrease our waiting list; and, 3) build a fenced area at the back of the property for the storage of stakes and other gardening materials over the winter.

We have been awarded a grant of \$5150 which NAGA must equal in monies and/or man power. The work will commence in early spring with completion before gardening season. Bill Nye and Lee Coates are the project co-ordinators and are trying to locate 20 to 30 loads of free clean fill. Anyone with knowledge of local construction projects should advise the co-ordinators.

GARDENS LEFT CLUTTERED

Each year in early November the Association hires a tractor operator to plow the annual gardens in preparation for the following spring.

A condition of your garden lease is that you remove all materials such as tomato stakes and cages, containers, tools and other obstructions by October 31, to let the plow do its work.

This year, nearly half of the gardens had debris still lying about after the summer season, forcing a small team of volunteers to spend the better part of two days cleaning up the mess.

Two plots in particular, # 18 and # 34, were unacceptably untidy. Their owners will be contacted and notified that they are in jeopardy of losing their gardens next year.

OTTAWA PLANT CYCLE

A PLACE ONLINE TO TRADE SEEDS, PLANTS, ADVICE, TIPS. ONE CONDITION:
EVERYTHING MUST BE FREE!! COME JOIN THE FUN AND FELLOWSHIP!!

OttawaPlantcycle

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ottawa_plantcycle/

<http://tinyurl.com/cys7b>

