

Spring 2010

NAGA Newsletter

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Vacant

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Director:

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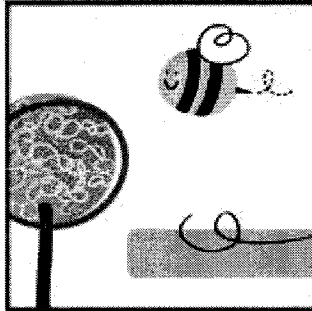
Director at Large:

Amanda Lancaster
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Director at Large:

Ron Rogers 613-228-2909

**Nepean Allotment
Garden Association
(NAGA) operates The
Viewmount Gardens
since 1991 and is
volunteer-based!**



It's here!

But what does it mean?

An early spring indeed. Lovely to behold and oh, so good for the soul, especially if you're a gardener. But there's a nagging feeling somewhere in the recesses of the mind that can't help but wonder what the rest of the gardening season has in store for us. If the weather is beautiful in March, will we pay for it in May and June? Something to ponder but for the moment, let's enjoy it while we can and don't forget:

**Deadline for renewing your garden plot is
Wednesday, April 14, 2010**

After that date, your garden will be allocated to another gardener. There will be no exceptions or time extensions.

Volunteering Vs. contracting out: the on-going debate at NAGA

With an ever increasing number of futuristic gardeners on our waiting list, this is the time to ask ourselves whether we are really committed to real gardening or simply throwing in some seeds in May to come back in August to pick the weeds. Some of us donate time and effort to make this organization survive, prosper and become an example for other community gardens around the city to follow. However, there is a lot of physical work to keep things tidy, safe and operational.

NAGA NEEDS YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE AS AN ORGANIZATION OPERATING THIS SITE FROM THE CITY OF OTTAWA!

Every year, we call on volunteers to come out and help in all facets of our work: from staking plots to cleaning, trimming, composting, painting and planting flowers. **This is a volunteer-run association not a City-run.** All contributions of skills and time are greatly appreciated. Most needed are some positions that are still vacant on the board of Directors: Vice-Chair and Maintenance Director. This last season, BOD encountered a lot less enthusiasm in the number and quality of volunteers. We debated the issue of contracting out some of the physically demanding tasks, such as grass cutting, composting and construction and water repairs. There was no clear consensus on whether we should continue pushing for volunteerism or pay a person or a contracting company to do such work.

BOD decided to refer this decision back to all members and have their say in this. You will find in this year's mail out a survey question about this issue. Please tick the answer you believe is right, or even better, show up in person in our yearly AGM meeting this April 2010 and participate in live debate. We simply can not carry on with the very few, much appreciated volunteers that show up every single time!

Mike Chebbo

Please note!

This year, along with your 2010 allotment renewal form, you will find 2 additions which need your undivided attention:

1. A **survey** concerning the problem of the lack of volunteers to help make the

Viewmount Gardens an enjoyable place to garden. Each member is asked to **please fill out and return the survey with their renewal form.**

2. **Amendments** which are intended to be added to the NAGA Constitution. It is proposed, that 3 items will be added to the document and that these changes will be **voted** upon at our yearly Annual General Meeting to be held April 14, 2010.

We ask that you read these carefully before coming out to vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Alert

It came to our attention last season that we now have a noxious weed in our allotment plots.

Ragweed is considered a noxious weed in Ontario as it is a primary cause of hay fever wherever it grows. Hay fever is caused by a reaction to the pollen released by ragweed from mid-July to the end of August. Cutting back the weed will delay flowering only. Therefore, ragweed needs to be pulled out completely to prevent it from flowering and shedding pollen. This is most easily done when the plant is small as it does get rather large when mature.

Please check the NAGA bulletin board on the shed for photographs of this weed for identification purposes. And **PLEASE** pull them out before they flower.

The usual suspects



AGMmeeting

Wednesday, April 14, 2010 7:00pm

Have your say. Come and vote!
We'd like to hear from you!

Proposals on the agenda:

- Would you like a washroom at the gardens?
- Volunteering for the NAGA – are you willing to pay **not** to?
- Does the soil in your plot need a boost?

The Annual General Meeting is to be held at the lodge in General Burns Park on Argue Drive.

Parking off Chesterton and Argue drives.

Refreshments served.

Compost

A charitable organization will again be on-site to sell bagged compost at the beginning of the season. The date for this event will be posted on the bulletin board on the shed. Notice will also be sent via e-mail.

It's a privilege

Gardening at the Viewmount Gardens is a privilege that is earned. Your neighbours deserve respect and consideration and the terms and conditions of plot rental upheld. The privilege is earned but it can also be lost. With over 100 applicants on our waiting list, someone else would be more than happy to earn that privilege. Don't abuse it or you may lose it!

Spring into the clean up

Be a sport! 20 minutes is all it takes!

- Clear up a rock pile
- Pick up some trash
- Make 1 trip to the compost heap
- Push a wheelbarrow
- Clean up some tools
- Help organize the tool shed

Bring your neighbour and it will soon be over.

Spring clean up of the allotment gardens will take place on the following dates:

Saturday April 24, 9:00am to 12noon

Sunday April 25, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Coffee anyone?

We are grateful

To all the people who are there when help is required at the Gardens: Our sincere thanks and appreciation!

They often go unnoticed
Until some thing goes wrong
Some will work long hours
When we are not around.

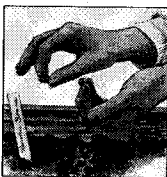
The grass would be long
The plots would be dry
Trash would be piled
And the sheds would be awry.

The Gardens bring us joy
A place to plant and grow
We're thankful for the ones
Who always make it so!

The last straw

Bales of straw will be sold, on-site, to interested gardeners again this year. Date to be determined.

Tips, thoughts & tales



Even in a cold climate it's almost never too early to plant a salad garden. Heat is the nemesis of leafy greens. Too often gardeners begin just in time for one or two early summer meals before the whole thing self-destructs, turning bitter and inedible. Start in early spring when the soil is thawed enough to be dug with your fingers, yet cool to the touch—generally about a month before the last expected spring frost date. For the Ottawa area, the last spring frost date is May 6.

If you're starting seedlings indoors to transplant into your garden when the weather permits, remember, seedlings are vulnerable to disease pathogens often found in soil. Losing a crop to mould and mildew, called damping off, is discouraging. So, be sure to use fresh soil or soil-less mixes like Pro-Mix and to be doubly sure, especially if you are using your own soil mix, follow this procedure for soil sterilization to ensure healthy seedlings:

Place approximately 2 pounds of moist soil in a polypropylene bag. Leave the top open and place in the center of a microwave oven. Treat for 2½ minutes on full power of about 650 watts. After treatment close the top of the bag and allow the soil to cool before removing.

Gardeners in cooler climates should **not rush to get their tomatoes planted in the spring**. Wait until night time temperatures are reliably above 55 F /13 C or protect them with a cover at night. You won't gain any advantage by setting them out too early. Choose early maturing tomato varieties for spring growing in cooler climates. (Early Girl, Legend, Matina, Oregon Spring)

Tomatoes need some help to pollinate. Either insects, wind or gently hand shaking of the flowers is necessary to carry the pollen from the anthers to the stigma. During

weather extremes, there are often no insect pollinators in the garden. It sometimes helps attract more bees if you plant nectar rich flowers in your vegetable garden.

Don't automatically feed your tomato plants every week. Make sure your soil is healthy, with adequate organic matter. Apply a balanced fertilizer at planting and again when fruit forms. Too much nitrogen encourages the plant to grow more foliage, not more fruit.

Tomatoes have very deep roots, sometimes going down into the soil up to 5 feet. Shallow watering will stress and weaken the plants. **Water deeply once a week, during dry weather.**

Controlling Early Blight in Tomatoes

1. Use only clean seed saved from disease-free plants.
2. Remove and destroy crop residue at the end of the season.
3. Practice crop rotation to non-susceptible crops (3 years).
4. Promote good air circulation by proper spacing of plants. Avoid shaded areas, and avoid wind barriers.
5. Do not work in a wet garden, it will only spread the disease.
6. Irrigate early in the day to promote rapid drying of foliage. Water the roots, not the foliage.
7. Mulch will prevent water splattering onto the leaves during rainfall.
8. Healthy plants with adequate nutrition are less susceptible to the disease.
9. Remove the lower leaves after the first fruit sets, whether it is diseased or not.
10. Use resistant or tolerant varieties like 'Early Blight-Resistant' from Johnny Selected Seeds.
11. Sulphur or copper based fungicides, like Bordeaux Mix, can be used with care. But be aware that these are phytotoxic (plant-killing). Bordeaux Mix can cause flower drop and late harvest, for example.
12. Pray for perfect summer weather!

(see bulletin board on the shed for more info)

May your garden grow!