

Email: nagagardens@gmail.com

Website: <http://nepeanallotmentgarden.yolasite.com>

Spring 2014

NAGA Newsletter

Board of Directors:

Chairman:

Mike Chebbo
613-226-6164

Vice-Chair:

Ron Rogers
613-228-2909

Registrar:

Mary St-Jean
613-224-9169

Treasurer:

Benson Kwan
613-723-8624

Secretary:

Hélène Labbé
613-724-6699

Maintenance Director:

Angus Gray 613-695-7474

Director at Large:

Lee Coates 613-228-9701

Director at Large:

Abdalla Anani
613-523-0024

Director at Large:

Craig Hamm
613-727-3192

Director at Large:

Vince Comunale
613-225-5525

Director at Large:

Jane Huntley
613-226-7102



It was a long, cold

winter, perfect for ridding us of those unwanted plant pests that we find in our gardens every summer. But let's hope the pollinators like the bees and butterflies, that ensure good crop production, were able to survive in abundance. For a garden without these hard working insects is a sad garden indeed. Not only are they fascinating to watch, they perform the lion's share of our gardening work by pollinating the flowers that grow into the vegetables that we love to eat. Say "Welcome!" to spring, sun and Mr. Bee.

PLEASE remember to **renew your membership** with NAGA and send your yearly fee by **cheque** to the following address:

P.O. Box 65073 Merivale P.O. Ottawa, On. K2G 5Y3

**Deadline for renewing your garden plot is
Saturday, April 12, 2014**

After that date, your garden will be allocated to another gardener. No exceptions.

For All These Good Reasons....

...we spend hours in the sun gardening:

Have fun: with your family, friends and other neighbouring member.

Feeling of Community: When you participate in common gardens tasks and social events

Actual gardening: Where all plots must be worked on throughout the duration of the gardening season, and if you are away for an extended period during the growing season, you must find someone to look after your plot in your absence. If you can't find someone, inform a Board member so that other arrangements can be made.

Organic and free of insecticides: As chemical insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers are prohibited in the garden, we strive to look for alternatives (insecticidal soaps) and encourage organic compost and composted manures.

Physical workout: For garden plots to be maintained according to the Rules and Regulations that you sign for at the start of every season, this involves hand watering, weeding and general care of the assigned plot, and the immediate surrounding pathways.

Keeping the garden tidy! By using the site recycling and trash bins as provided. If containers are not available or are full then please remove your own waste/recyclable materials or offer help emptying these bins.

Enjoying and sharing harvest: Crops must be harvested once they are mature. Produce from plants are not to be sold but could be shared with others or food banks, hundreds of pounds are donated through plant-a-row give-a-row initiative every year. All produce harvested from the garden should be washed thoroughly before eating.

Being considerate to other neighbouring plots: When you do not plant sprawling crops or tall ones that might interfere with others, when you harvest only from your assigned plot, when you keep insects and weeds under control and, if you wish to

bring pets into the garden, you keep them on leash, under control and out of garden plots at all times.

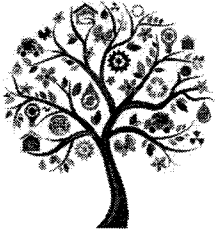
Donating some of your time to reduce fees: The annual fee that you pay as membership barely covers the basic expenses of our garden site. Volunteer work is always encouraged and appreciated to reduce those expenses.

Being environmentally conscious by composting on-site: Members are encouraged to make use of and help maintain the common composting area near the central sheds and come out during the season whenever we call for a working weekend to empty small compost bins.

Saving and caring about our assets in the sheds: All common gardening tools are there to use at your own risk and should be stored within the shed. Please lock the shed whenever you are done and do not see any other gardeners nearby with tools. We all have the combination to that lock anyway.

Behaving responsibly when a dispute arises: In the event of non-compliance with NAGA rules, the Board will issue a verbal or written notice to the member. If at the end of a two-week period the problem has not been solved, the plot will be reassigned, and membership revoked. NAGA Board members conduct regular inspection of garden areas; if any contravention of rules is found, member will be contacted in person, by phone or email. NAGA Board is the only authority to resort to in case of members' conflict.

Mike Chebbo, Chairman



AGM^{eeting}

Saturday April 12, 2014 13:00pm

Tanglewood Park Community Centre
30 Woodfield Drive, Nepean

New ideas are always welcome!

On the agenda:

- Composting on *your* plot
- Calling all expert gardeners
- Applications are going on-line

Refreshments served.

Share Your Expertise

Every year, NAGA welcomes new members to our gardens. Although some of these 'Newbies' bring years of gardening experience along with them, some are as green as the beans they are attempting to grow.

If you are a seasoned gardener, why not share your knowledge with an incoming member? If you are available to answer gardening questions and/or are interested in becoming a 'go to' person to a member who needs advice, please let us know.

We hope to establish a group of knowledgeable people within our organization who would be willing to advise new members (or old ones) regarding gardening know how.

Contact: nagagardens@gmail.com

New NAGA Website and Blog

<http://nepeanallotmentgarden.yolasite.com>

For current events, announcements, and items of interest to gardeners, visit the web log ('blog') at: <http://nagaottawa.blogspot.ca>

If you have gardening stories or helpful information you can share it with the world by submitting it to the blog.

See you there!

5th Annual September Picnic

We are looking forward to seeing you at this year's potluck picnic taking place on:

Saturday, September 13, from 2-4pm.

It's a great opportunity to meet your neighbours, exchange gardening ideas and relax too, knowing that you've accomplished another season of great gardening.



Taking Vacation This Summer?

Are serious issues keeping you from your plot?

Gardening is rewarding, but it is a lot of work to keep a garden tidy. Weed control keeps the garden looking good for the community and is also a courtesy to adjacent plots; they don't want *your* weeds to propagate to *their* plot. But sometimes, life takes over, and you just can't get to the garden for a week or more, and the weeds will grow, and grow rapidly!

If you are going on vacation during the gardening months, please have somebody help you out during your absence. As a last resort please notify a Board member that you are going to be away for a period. In this case the Board may be able to enlist help to keep the weeds *controlled* while you are away. At least the 'weed patrol' will be aware why there may be a problem.

Unfortunately, if you find yourself dealing with a serious family issue, illness for example, and you cannot keep up with your garden plot while you deal with this, please look for help from a friend or other gardener to *control* the weeds in your plot. If that is not possible, as a last resort please let a member of the NAGA Board know. We do not want or need personal details. But we *might* be able to *help* you keep the weeds under *control* while you deal with much more serious issues.

To contact the Board, please email:
nagagardens@gmail.com

Compost / Straw

Free compost will be available to gardeners this year. Advance notice for this event will be posted on the bulletin board on the shed. Notice will also be sent via e-mail.

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

Spring Start Up

Come and chat with your friends and neighbours. Join us for our yearly appraisal of the land and preparations for the gardening season. We've got lots to do!

Volunteers will be eligible for a \$5.00 Voucher which can be redeemed, next year, to reduce their plot rental fee.

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

Saturday April 26, 9:00am to 12noon
Sunday April 27, 1:00pm to 3:00pm



Getting To Grips

Problem Plots

The Board of Directors (BOD) of the Nepean Allotment Garden Association (NAGA) have been struggling with too many garden plots which are not being maintained or gardened according to the Terms and Conditions of License (TCL). In 2012 at the Annual General Meeting the members in attendance made it very clear to the BOD that we must enforce the TCLs which each gardener agrees to by signing their name at the beginning of the gardening year. The reasons for enforcing these terms are not arbitrary - they are for creating a garden which is much easier to administer and maintain, to promote good and organic gardening practices, to prevent the spread of weeds and insect infestations, to create a pleasant atmosphere for all members in the garden, to work within the legal framework of NAGA's agreement with the City of Ottawa, and to present a good image to the surrounding community, whose good will we depend upon for support.

During 2012 and 2013 representatives of the BOD inspected each garden plot throughout the growing season, and end of season, for clear violations of the TCLs. While the BOD does not enjoy doing this there is no alternative method to replace visual inspections. Inspections were always done by at least two people and carried out in as fair and reasonable way as is possible. Each on-site inspection of the full NAGA property took at least two hours (which also points to the magnitude of the problem). On average at each inspection, in 2013, there were **30 plots (15 serious, or 'RED category')** in violation of the TCLs. Minor

violations were routinely overlooked and not recorded.

For garden plots where serious problems exist, a written record and photographs were taken. In cases where serious violations occurred an email or letter was sent to the gardener. Sometimes a dialogue occurred to clarify any misunderstandings or to put the problem into context. In many cases the gardener followed up with corrective action and the matter was put to rest. In other cases no corrective actions were taken, and follow-up inspections found problems still existed, had barely been addressed, or had worsened.

Along with the annual lease renewal, some members will have received additional letters indicating problems with their plots, and a determination of the Board of Directors subcommittee on weeds. The determinations are as follows:

[] Monitor the member's plot during the 2014 gardening season.

[] Reduce the member's number of plots.

[] Issue final notice: The membership in NAGA will be cancelled in 2014 if serious violations of the TCLs persist.

[] Immediately cancel membership in NAGA.

Remember, the Board has no desire to interfere with you or your gardens as long as all reasonable efforts are made to work within the TCLs. The amount of time it takes for volunteers to monitor, record, track, and follow-up on the problems in the garden is much more than anyone can imagine. We would much rather be working in our own gardens at those times.

Headlands: What Are They?

... and what are your responsibilities?

Plot inspections reveal an ongoing problem in the NAGA gardens. Many plot keepers do not keep their headlands clear of debris, or grass, or weeds. Some people have had fencing falling into the headlands, or have placed mulch on them (in a failed effort to keep weeds down), or they have stored compost there, occasionally tools end up there, or they are putting rocks from their plot on them. This can result in the gardener getting a letter or warning from the Board of Directors regarding their headlands.

What are headlands?

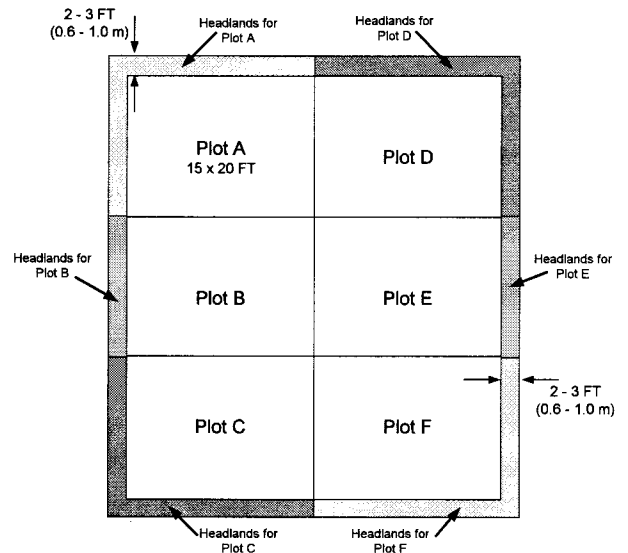
According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

Headland: *unplowed land at the ends of furrows or near a fence.*

In the NAGA garden the headlands include a strip of ground about 2 to 3 feet wide extending from the edge of your plot outside boundary. The headlands, for a variety of plot positions, are shown in the diagram below. People with corner plots (A, C, D, F) have almost double the amount of headlands to keep clean than people with 'edge' plots (B and E).

The Terms and Conditions of Lease are:

- Plots are to be kept neat and tidy and the long grass on the perimeters is to be trimmed.
- Paths, laneways and the parking lot must be kept free and clear of obstacles and vegetation.
- Rocks are not to be thrown in the paths or laneways.



Garden Gold

Something For Nothing

Your garden waste, plant clippings and weeds can be used to enrich your own garden. Your plants and weeds use nutrients from your soil to grow. Rather than toting all of that green stuff to the compost bins and losing the nutrients in the process, simply pile it in an unused corner of your garden or spread it between the rows as mulch. In the fall, chop the remains of your garden into manageable pieces (6" to 12") and spread everything evenly over your soil so it will be plowed under. By the time that it has been plowed and gone through a long winter it will have decomposed and released lots of humus (nutrients) back into your soil, enriching it for FREE.

When you build your own compost pile, throw a few shovels of soil over each layer to help it decompose faster and watering it during a dry spell helps too. There is no point in adding weed seeds to your garden plot, so pull up or cut off your weeds when they are young, before they go to seed. Your plants will thank you, and so will your plot neighbours.

Mulch helps to preserve soil moisture and prevents weed germination. A four to six inch layer of dead weeds between the rows can really reduce your watering needs.

When the NAGA management asks you to clean up in the fall, they need all of the fencing, boards, frames, garbage, metal etc. off the garden, and the garden levelled so that there is nothing to interfere with the plowing. This does not mean that all of the organic matter needs to go in the compost bins; they are perfectly happy to see it reused on your own garden. Save yourself, and NAGA volunteers, a lot of time and effort - instead of moving all your dead and dying plant material to the compost bins, leave it on your plot for the winter. It is free nutrients for next year's crop.

Waste Management

Everyone's Business

My name is Angus and as the Maintenance Director of the Nepean Allotment Garden Association (NAGA), I would like to welcome all new and returning gardeners to this year's garden season.

My role is to help ensure that our garden stays clean and safe for everyone to enjoy.

To do this, we need your help! Below is some important information, which may help to answer questions for the new members and will also serve as a reminder to returning gardeners.

Please help us keep the gardens clean and free of garbage by adhering to the following:

1. Use the small garbage containers (attached to the compost bins) for small pieces of garbage only. If you have more than a handful or so of garbage, you must use the garbage cans near the storage lockers in the parking lot.
2. Never put any garbage in the composters. Only garden waste (clippings, trimmings, weeds, dead plants etc.) should

be put in the compost bins. Likewise, don't put your garden waste in the garbage.

3. If you need to dispose of wood or sticks, you must bundle them together in up to 4 foot lengths and bind them with string. Place these next to the garbage cans.

4. Garbage not placed in the bins properly can easily be blown around, so please take care when placing anything in the bins and double check that nothing has fallen out or blown away.

5. All garbage bins have plastic bags. If you notice that a bag has fallen into the garbage bin, please try to pull it around the rim before using it.

6. Remember the gardens are maintained by volunteers, so please try to help out by picking up garbage you happen to see on the ground even if it isn't yours.

Thank you for respecting these basic guidelines, so that we can all enjoy the garden. Together, let's have a great and safe summer.

Angus Gray
Maintenance Director

Are You "Fence Friendly"?

Our regulations state:

Mesh fences for groundhog control only, are to be **NO taller than 3 feet (1m) and placed 6 inches (15cm) within the border** of your garden to allow for grass cutting. No plants are to be grown on these fences.

Fences and trellises for climbing plants that are taller than 3 feet are to be **placed 2 feet (60cm) inside the garden boundaries** to prevent sun blockage, to allow for weeding and to prevent injury to your neighbours.

Please, consider your neighbours when putting up fences.



Tips, thoughts and tales

Pollination is the process by which pollen is transferred from anther to stigma in the reproduction of plants, thereby enabling fertilization and sexual reproduction. In the vegetable garden, it is the process that ensures the production of all the vegetables we love to grow and eat but for the plant itself, it is the process that ensures the propagation of its seeds, the production of new plants and the survival of its genes for generations to come.

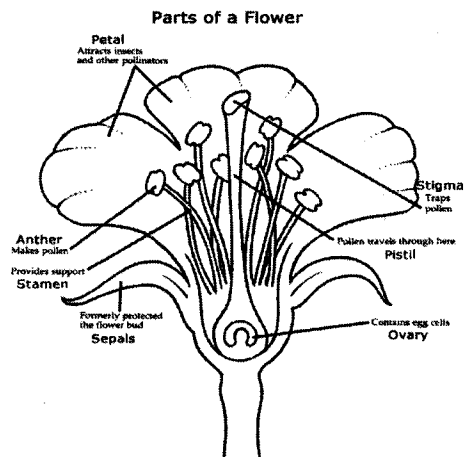
Many plants, including our favourites in the vegetable garden, rely on several mechanisms to promote pollination of their flowers, the main ones being the wind and insects like bees, flies, butterflies, wasps, certain birds and even some mammals like we, ourselves. It is to our advantage to welcome pollinating insects to our gardens and planting a few nectar producing plants alongside our vegetables can help pave the way to a bountiful crop. Zinnia, calendula, snapdragon, salvia, lavender and sage all produce flowers that feed pollinating insects. In exchange, they will gladly pollinate our beans or cucumbers once they find themselves in a flower rich area where more localized food means less energy spent searching for it. A one-stop shopping experience for Buzzy the Bee!

When a bee carries pollen on its fuzzy back from one flower to another, it is unknowingly helping that particular crop towards a mixing of the gene pool, therefore ensuring 'hybrid vigour' in the crossing over of traits. It is for this reason that 'open pollinated' crops like cucumbers and squash will often not produce a pure line in the next generation should you save the seeds of these crops for the following season. Plants in this family, which include squash, cucumbers, melons, gourds, luffa etc., will cross pollinate and if two or more types are grown in close proximity, chances are that the pollen from the cucumber will be carried to a melon flower, or vice versa, leaving you with less than pure seeds of that tasty melon at the end of the season.

Of course, man has taken advantage of this procedure whenever hand pollination takes

place, in the form of a small paint brush. By supplying a particular flower with the desired pollen, we are ensuring a pure line in the next generation. The melon will be 'true' to its original parent. By the same token, by supplying the flower with the desired pollen we can also ensure the crossing of genes which gives us 'hybrid' seeds. Hand pollination is labour intensive, requiring careful study of plant traits in order to propagate favourable traits instead of unwanted ones. Sometimes the cross is difficult to bring to maturation and little seed is produced. For these reasons, seeds of certain plants come at a hefty price. Wherever the word 'hybrid' enters into the description of a plant in a seed catalogue, you can be sure that the cost of those seeds will be higher than others. If you've ever considered growing hybrid pansies, you will be amazed at the cost of a few seeds!

Fortunately, with a large proportion of plants, seeds are produced at no great effort from a gardener other than being on hand when the seeds are ripe for the picking. Most herbs will happily bring forth plenty of seeds to use the following year and many ornamental flowers as well. Vegetable seed production requires more care to ensure a 'true to type' seed but if you're not too concerned about the outcome, a little experimentation can bring interesting results. Who knows... there may be a breeder within you struggling to express his or her full potential!



(image: Copyright 1997-2014 Journey North)