

## A Fall Project for Everyone

~ Cheryl Fiddis

If you love the texture, colours and shapes of grasses, leaves and flowers in your garden, why not press and preserve them to enjoy indoors. Fall is a perfect time to go collecting, and don't limit your collection only to leaves: remember that grasses and ferns with their delicate patterns can make a striking display, as well as some remaining late blooming flowers. To gather your collection, look 'outside the box' as the saying goes and get creative. See what different cuttings might work together. When you have gathered your selections, remember the more detailed and varied make for a more striking display. Lay your cuttings onto a paper towel, cover with a second paper towel, and carefully place into a heavy book, - phone books work well for this. Pile more weight on top and leave until the cuttings are fully dried. This takes about 2 weeks. Resist the urge to check the cuttings, as you may disturb or damage them.

When you are ready, gather a few picture frames, - old or new, and arrange your cuttings in a pleasing pattern. Once finished, a great place to hang your creations is in a bathroom or kitchen. And when you are ready for something new, simply gather new material and re-frame for a new look. What a wonderful way to record the favorite things in your garden!

If anyone tries this, why not bring your framed art to the next meeting to share with other members?



# Send me your secrets!

Send to Cheryl Fiddis @ [ecfiddis@telus.net](mailto:ecfiddis@telus.net)

We would love to have more members share their 'secrets' and garden thoughts. If you have something interesting to share, whether from a locale far away, or right here at home, please share with us!

## Gophers vs. Gardeners

~ By Ron Sissons

~ *The Almanac for Farmers & City Folk*

*While gophers are listed as some of the worst troublemakers in gardens, they have ample justification for creating disorder. After all, they had well-established occupancy rights before humans moved in. Can't we all just get along?*

Today, with more and more of their operating terrain paved over with asphalt and cement, and finding themselves a target for extermination whenever indications of their presence becomes apparent, they still doggedly and persistently follow their pattern of peaceful coexistence with humans – but to no avail. The gopher spends its waking hours looking for food, but ever mindful of the rights of others, it keeps out of everyone's way and does its foraging and feeding underground, which of course necessitates digging tunnels or runways. Gophers feed on roots, bulbs and underground stems.

About the size of a large rat, the gopher is well adapted to life underground. Dense, soft fur – that lies forward like that of the mole – covers its body. The gopher's eyes are small and weak; it is nearsighted. Well developed tear glands provide the eyes with plenty of moisture to cleanse them of dirt. Tiny ears are hidden underneath fur. The huge front teeth are outside the mouth, and are used for tearing roots and loosening soil when the animal is tunneling. Lips close tightly so that no soil can enter the mouth during tunneling operations. The gopher's tail is

short, bare, and has a sensitive tip that is used to feel the way as the animal moves backwards through its tunnels.

The gopher burrows four to eight inches underground. The strong front teeth tear at any obstacles in its way, while the long claws on its front feet dig through the earth and the back feet kick the soil to the rear. When the newly formed tunnel behind the gopher becomes clogged with dirt, the clever animal turns around and, putting its front paws over its nose, pushes the dirt to a disposal location. Naturally the gopher has a soil disposal problem. When all the disused runways have been packed with soil, the surplus has to be placed somewhere, so the gopher digs short branch tunnels up to the ground surface, through which it pushes the loosened soil into a tidy heap for the benefit of anyone who wishes to make use of it. However, it is in the nature of things that good motives are often misconstrued, and gardeners are known to be particularly infuriated when their lawn areas are dotted by tiny piles of soil placed there overnight by industrious gophers.



Unfortunately, the gophers are unable to communicate their good intentions to gardeners and the latter, not understanding the former's abiding desire to be helpful, respond in the only way they know how; with gas, traps, and poisonous baits, and with a flood of water from the hose. Accordingly, all kinds of lore has built up within the ranks of gardeners on the destruction of the long-suffering gopher. Baiting traps with pieces of apple is advocated by some, with dissension among the apple baiters as to which variety of apple is the most effective. Consensus indicates that gophers are lured by Red Delicious more than any other apple variety, with Rome Beauty second on the chart.

Some gopher trappers insist that trap bait is unnecessary, but that the hole made to insert the trap in the runway should be left uncovered. The theory on which they base this conclusion is that gophers are naturally curious, and seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, will hurry along into the trap to see why his

roof fell in. On the other hand, other gardeners insist that the trap hole should be covered, because gophers hate drafts whipping up their tunnels, and will drop everything to push a mass of soil into the hole to plug the air current, and in doing so, spring the trap ahead of themselves with the soil they are pushing.

Some gardeners fight without using poisonous bait because they believe that in addition to being naturally curious, the gopher is also naturally suspicious – so any food package mysteriously appearing in a subterranean tunnel has to be suspect, and that the curious but wary gopher will tidily bury the poisoned morsel in the floor of the tunnel.

Just as gophers try not to interfere with the rights of other creatures, they respect the territory of their own kind, and tend to lead a solitary existence. They don't hibernate, and are active throughout the year. In colder areas, gophers usually have a single litter in the spring; in warmer climes two or three families may be produced each year. The male gopher does not stick around with his family, and the young burrow off to all points of the underground compass to lead their lonely lives as soon as they are weaned from their mother's milk.

Unlike other members of the rodent order, gophers are unable to swim. They should be given a wide berth during wet weather, for if there is one thing gophers cannot stand, it is wet feet. As soon as rainwater percolates through the tunnel roofs, they surface and run for higher ground – in most cases the nearest lawn!

Given the sensitivity of gardeners, it is no wonder gophers are losing ground, and continuing programs of eradication sees their numbers declining. You may be able to get rid of the creatures in your little corner of the world, but there will, of course, always be pockets of resistance by diehard gophers, especially in parks, golf courses and in odd vacant lots throughout urban communities. But urban and suburban communities are entirely enemy country for these spunky little animals, who only ask to be given a small share of the territory – just the top few inches!

## BRAGS

### Membership/Meetings

Annual membership cost \$12. Members share various gardening interests and enjoy 10% discount of regularly priced items at Garden Works by presenting their membership cards. All meetings start at 7 pm at the Burnaby Village Museum, - Main Building, 2<sup>nd</sup>

## **BRAGS EXECUTIVE**

### **President**

Verna Adamson  
604-294-5550

### **Vice-President**

Lanny Hui  
604-415-8287

### **Treasurer**

Susan Brandl  
604-433-4250

### **Secretary**

Linda Cholette  
604-298-9059

### **Past President**

Judy Wellington  
604-434-8287

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Membership**

Anne Forsyth  
604-298-6350

### **Nominations**

Judy Wellington

### **Publicity**

Vacant

### **Rhododendron Festival**

Wendy Thompson  
604-420-6513

## **OTHER COMMITTEES**

### **Garden Tour**

Vacant

### **Plant Sale**

Lanny Hui

### **Newsletter**

Cheryl Fiddis  
604-435-2801

Anne & David Forsyth

604-298-6350

### **Welcome**

Faye Kilpatrick  
604-434-5921

Sheila Chowdhury

604-298-1196

### **Raffle**

Faye Kilpatrick  
604-434-5921

### **Refreshments**

Vacant

### **Speakers**

Rosemarie Daviduk  
604-431-6207

### **Website**

David Forsyth  
604-298-6350

floor. It's centrally located and there is ample parking. Refreshments are served. All are welcome. Bring your own mug to be eco-friendly! Bring a friend too!



On a sad note, long time BRAGS member Ormond Slean passed away in early September. Predeceased by his wife Joy, both were avid members of our club for many years. Our condolences are extended to the family.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

### **October 3, 2012 BRAGS Meeting**

Bud Black will give a talk on the care and growing of Chrysanthemums. He has been growing them for decades and has even exhibited them at the PNE more than 50 years ago! He also participates in the annual Rhodo Festival, showing and selling his Chrysanthemums. Come join us for what is bound to be an interesting evening!

### **November 7, 2012 BRAGS Meeting**

Come and see the techniques behind those fabulous eco-sculptures you see throughout Burnaby! Our guest is Heather Edwards, Manager of Park Planning & Design, City of Burnaby. The 'living artwork' known as eco-sculptures have been seen throughout Burnaby since 2003. Heathers' talk will reveal the origins of the program, the construction methods used, and the community involvement that has made this a signature program in our City.

### **December 5, 2012 BRAGS Meeting: AGM & Christmas Party**

Our December meeting will include our AGM and election of new members as required. Per the By-Laws, written nominations must be submitted by November 21, 2012 to our Nominations Committee: Judy Wellington and Verna Adamson. If you are interested in any position, please contact Judy or Verna. More details of available positions will be advised at the November meeting.

Once the business part of our meeting is concluded, our Christmas party will begin. Bring your significant other, or a guest, plus a dish to share, as we celebrate the season and welcome 2013!

### **Mango Cheese Spread**

For those of you who attended the BRAGS picnic this summer, many of you requested Lorraine Dowdalls "Mango Cheese Spread" recipe. Here it is, and just in time for the winter party season! Thank you Lorraine for sharing this!

1 pkg. 250 g. cream cheese

1/2 pkg. McLaren's cheese (comes in a round red and black container)

1 tsp curry powder

Mix all above together and rest it for 2 hours.

Put into a shallow bowl and cover with Sweet mango chutney (Patak's 250 ml jar or whatever brand you like).

Sprinkle with currents and toasted sliced almonds - 1/2 c. each

Serve with crackers. YUMMY!

