

A Sense of a Goose

~ Author Unknown

This Fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in “V” formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in “V” formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone – and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those people who are headed the same way we are.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs, whether with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What messages do we give when we honk from behind?

Finally – and this is important – when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies; and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.



If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

Send me your secrets!

Send to Cheryl Fiddis @ ecfiddis@telus.net

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

Poinsettias!

One of the traditional signs of the holiday season is the poinsettia plant. Unlike decorations that are boxed up for the next year, poinsettias, when taken care of, will last well beyond the holiday season. Here are some tips for getting the most enjoyment out of your poinsettia.

~ What many people think of as vibrant red, pink, yellow or cream-colored flowers are actually bracts, or modified leaves. Wilted plants will tend to lose their bracts sooner.

~ Place poinsettias in a room where there is bright natural light, but not where there is direct sunlight on the plant.

~ Do not let the plant touch a cold window-sill. The contact may result in black spots.

~ The bright colour of the bracts will remain longer if room temperature does not exceed 22 C (71.5F). A consistently comfortable temperature is very important for poinsettias.

~ Water your plant when the soil feels dry to the touch.

~ Keep the soil moist. Avoid overwatering or leaving the plant to sit in standing water. Remove the protective wrap and allow the water to completely drain. This will help prevent the green leaves from dropping or curling.

~ Keep the plant away from cold drafts or from

heated air vents or registers. This is a major cause of leaves dropping off.

~ Poinsettias are sensitive to the cold and will not survive outside.

~ Fertilize your plant after the blooming season with a balanced all-purpose fertilizer. Do not fertilize a poinsettia when it's in bloom.

When you're gathering with friends and family this season, your poinsettia will impress them with its beauty, while you can impress them with the following poinsettia facts (compiled by the University of Illinois Extension Poinsettia Pages, <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/poinsettia>).

~ The belief that poinsettias are poisonous is a misconception. There is ample, well-documented scientific evidence that they are a safe plant. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 22 kilogram (50 pound) child who ate 500 bracts might have a slight tummy ache. However, poinsettias should not be intended for human or animal consumption.

~ A fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the centre of the bracts. Plants that have shed their pollen will soon drop their colourful bracts.

~ To get a poinsettia to reflower, keep it in darkness between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. until colour shows on the bracts.



BRAGS Membership

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, 2nd 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!

Upcoming Meetings

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 with the election of new members as required. 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!

Nominations, Nominations, Nominations!

No we're not talking about the U.S. elections! Our BRAGS meeting in December will not only host our Christmas party, but also our AGM. Per the By-Laws, *written* nominations must be submitted by November 21, 2012 to our Nominations Committee: Judy Wellington and Verna Adamson. During our November meeting, the available positions will be confirmed and discussed. If you think you are interested in any position, whether currently or in the future, please speak to Verna or Judy. Holding any one of these positions can be both rewarding and enjoyable! If you are not able to attend the November meeting, please remember that nominations cannot be accepted less than 14 days prior to the AGM, or during the AGM. Should there be positions available once the AGM has concluded they can be discussed and/or elected at that time. And remember, many of our positions can be shared! Why not ask a friend to share with you?

We would like to thank Rosemarie for the excellent job she did with the Speaker Program, and we welcome Bev Glover who will take over this position from Rosemarie. We also welcome Debbie Vallee who has stepped into the long vacant Publicity position!

Out & About

GardenWorks: Christmas Open House

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

Debbie Vallee
604-436-2611

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

Bev Glover
604-540-2883

Website

David Forsyth
604-298-6350

Thursday, November 15th

A special Customer Appreciation Day at all locations. Start your holiday season with 15% discounts all day.

GardenWorks, Mandeville location:

Chicks, Cheese & Christmas!

Tuesday, November 27th, 6 – 10 pm

Be sure to mark the date for the GardenWorks Mandeville Gardens annual girlfriend shopping gala and evening! Fun, refreshments and prizes! Please note this event takes place only at the Mandeville location.

What's In Your Backyard?

The Northern Flicker: *Colaptes auratus*

~ Cheryl Fiddis

Have you noticed these fabulous birds in your backyard? (I must confess I am more interested in the wildlife in my yard, than the yard itself).

While I see flickers year round in mine, it was the first day of Fall this year when half a dozen arrived in my yard, increased numbers from the usual pair. During the winter I have noticed they normally arrive just before the snow falls, or before a storm.

For a long time, it was thought that Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted Flickers were different species, the Red-shafted found here, west of the Rockies, and the Yellow-shafted to the east of the Rockies. They are now known to be one species, the Northern Flicker. The phrase 'red-shafted' refers to the color of the feather quills of the flight feathers in the wings. Seen from below, these quills are red in the birds commonly found around the city. Probably the most widely noticed of the woodpeckers in this area, they are relatively large – a little smaller than a jay – with a brown crown, grey face with a red mustache and a black and brown barred body. Its white rump is evident in flight. Unlike other woodpeckers, flickers are often seen feeding on the ground and I've often seen them sharing our garden and bird baths with the Robins and other smaller birds.

They excavate holes in trees for nesting cavities and these holes are often used by other species in subsequent breeding seasons. Birds such as bluebirds, American Kestrels, European Starlings, swallows and the smaller owls – even squirrels – use them. The holes are made in anything of wood, from dead trees to telephone poles and fence posts. Over the summer this year, one nested in the telephone pole at the end of my street; every time I drove around the corner I was sure to look up to see a little head peaking out. They will even try wood on houses; that, combined with their early morning 'drumming' on the noisiest thing they can find, such as metal downpipe, have made them somewhat infamous.

What's in YOUR backyard? I'd love to hear about it!

