

Ground Covers...Or Lawns?



April is Here!

April may bring showers, but this is the month that finally seems to be when Spring arrives, at least some of the time. The days are longer, the temperatures warmer, and it's time to start some early planting! This is especially true if you have a greenhouse to start your seeds. There are many to choose from, but here are a few that are popular when starting from seed: Tomatoes, Zucchini, Cucumber, Sunflowers, Lettuce, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Peas, Beans...we all have our favorites. To get an early start, I usually prefer to buy small vegetable plants at the local garden centre, only because I tend to be impatient. Then once they are well on their way, I plant seeds for a second crop. When choosing multiple varieties of vegetable plants, be sure to stagger the maturity dates if possible, to enjoy your harvest over a longer period of time. By using compost in my garden, there are always numerous surprises that 'spring' up, mostly lettuce and tomatoes. These rogue surprises tend to be the hardiest of all, and are most welcome. I'm sure the local birds are also responsible for some of my surprises as well! Happy Planting!



For many Metro Vancouver homeowners, having the perfect lawn can be a challenge for a number of reasons. The Chafer beetle has wrecked havoc over the years, and is still a presence and still causing frustration for many gardeners. Lawn maintenance can also be very time consuming, especially over the summer months, - with regular mowing, fertilizing and watering. Ground covers can be an ideal solution, providing a low-maintenance remedy. Over the last few years, we've seen many homes make the switch to showcase ground covers and natural plantings. Not only the answer to numerous lawn problems, ground covers can prevent erosion on slopes while cutting back on watering and chemicals, encouraging wildlife and making the space eco-friendly.

If you are thinking of converting your lawn, it is a big decision and one that needs to be planned out carefully. One suggestion is to start with a small space and see how that evolves. A small area may be enough of a change and allow more time to focus on other areas. In my yard, a narrow upper section close to the street, was my project one year. Heavily shaded, this section of grass was pitiful and difficult to mow. Out came the grass, in went the shrubs and various ground covers, and a few large pavers were randomly placed to allow access into the area. Problem solved! Over the years some ground covers have proved invasive, - trying to take over the space, while others thrived and were a perfect fit. But what gardener hasn't made changes? This year, I am already planning to make some changes and see what else the space can do for me. I now know this space very well, - at least I think I do! Needs to be considered carefully, are the sun and shade for the space, what ground covers could be invasive, how tall and wide a shrub will spread, and what colors are your focus. My space is well shaded and this is something I can't change, although I have certainly tried planting a few things that need more sun...and these plantings were not successful. A few of my shrubs love the space and are larger than expected,

requiring much trimming to keep them under control.

The pavers have done well!

The birds love this space and are often seen hopping around in the safety of the low cover, looking for their next meal. I'm sure they appreciate this space more than a lawn, and luckily, I won't be changing it back anytime soon!



If you have anything to share, - stories or pictures, that you think our BRAGS members might enjoy, please send them on! We'd love to see them!

Send to Cheryl Fiddis @ ecfiddis@telus.net

Rhododendron Festival!

Preparations are well underway for the annual Rhodofest on Sunday, May 7, 2017.

We need volunteers on Saturday, May 6 for setup and especially for Sunday, May 7 at the Festival. The tasks required are diverse (i.e. distributing posters, picking up and organizing plants, skirting tables, directing traffic, cashiering, answering questions, cleanup etc). If you are able to volunteer, please sign up at the next meeting or contact Verna Adamson at 604-544-4006, by email at v_adamson@shaw.ca or Bev Glover at bglover@telus.net

The Plant Sale!

The annual BRAGS Plant Sale is being held again this year at the Rhododendron Festival. BRAGS members are encouraged to donate saleable plants to the Sale by bringing them to the Shadbolt Centre on Saturday, May 6 (times to be announced). Also, check with your neighbours and friends to see if they have any saleable plants to donate. The plants should be in good condition, in clean pots, and labelled with the common or botanical plant name. Plants that are not labelled are not saleable so should not be donated.

In addition to outdoor plants, consider donating houseplants that are in good condition. Plants such as peace lilies, african violets, dracaena, sansevieria, orchids, begonias and many others are always popular with our Plant Sale customers.

If you have any questions related to the Plant Sale or if you need plants picked up, please contact the Plant Sale Coordinator Anne Forsyth at amforsyth@telus.net or call 604-298-6350.



BRAGS Membership

Still only \$12 per year, BRAGS members share various gardening interests and enjoy monthly guest speakers, plus are entitled to discounts of regularly priced items at GardenWorks and other garden centres, simply by presenting their membership cards. Monthly meetings (excepting July & August) start at 7 pm at the Burnaby Village Museum, - Main Building, up on the 2nd floor. Easy to get to with ample free parking and refreshments are served! Please join us if you are looking to join a local garden club. Why not gift a membership to a friend or neighbor?

BRAGS EXECUTIVE

President

Wendy Thompson
604-420-6513

Vice-President

Bev Glover
604-540-2883

Treasurer

Susan Brandl
604-433-4250

Secretary

Linda Cholette
604-298-9059

Past President

Verna Adamson
604-294-5550

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STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership

Anne Forsyth
604-298-6350

Nominations

Verna Adamson

Publicity

Evelyn Crawford
604-437-8395

Rhododendron Festival

Verna Adamson
604-294-5550
Bev Glover
604-540-2883

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OTHER COMMITTEES

Plant Sale

David & Anne Forsyth

Newsletter

Cheryl Fiddis
604-435-2801

Anne & David Forsyth
604-298-6350

Welcome Desk

Janet Hayes
604-420-5995

Refreshments

Faye Kilpatrick
604-434-5921

Speakers

Beth MacLaren
604-253-7036

Website

David Forsyth
604-298-6350

Upcoming Meetings Events/Club News

April 5, 2017

Nicholas Funke, Managing Fruit & Young Trees

May 3, 2017

Janice Bobic, our longtime BRAGS member will talk on
"My Father's Garden" and Beekeeping.

May 7, 2017 – Rhodofest!

Mark the date! We need all the volunteers we can get, so if you haven't yet signed up to help, it's not too late to do so.

June 7, 2017

Deborah Jones, Rain Gardens

BRAGS will break over the summer.
See you at the September 6th meeting!

Out & About Etc...



GW Customer Appreciation Day, April 20th, 2017

Be sure to mark the date: GardenWorks 15% savings all day.

The Vancouver Shade Garden Society

Looking to expand your membership of garden clubs? The Vancouver Shade Garden Society welcomes new guests, and meets in the Cedar Room at VanDusen Garden on the third Friday of the month, excluding July, August, December & January. Doors are open at 7:30pm and meetings start at 7:45pm. Scheduled speakers are:

April 21

Joe Ronsley – "An Enhanced Woodland"

May 19

Pam Erickson- "Daylilies, Hostas & the evolution of their garden"

Spring!

*The only limit to your garden
is at the boundaries of your imagination. ~ Thomas D. Church*

