

NAGA Newsletter

June 2016



<http://nepeanallotmentgarden.yolasite.com>

nagagardens@gmail.com

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Board of Directors:

Chair: Mike Chebbo
Vice-Chair: Amanda Lancaster
Registrar: Kaylee McKay
Treasurer: Benson Kwan
Secretary: Michele McMillan

Maintenance Director: Dengi Wang
Abdallah Anani (Director at Large)
Vince Comunale (Director at Large)
Ron Rogers (Director at Large)

The current board of directors would like to thank our outgoing directors Patricia Avendaño, Lee Coates, Craig Hamm, and Jayne Huntley for all of their efforts over the years on the NAGA board of directors.

NAGA's annual picnic - Volunteer opportunity

We are looking for a volunteer to organize this year's annual picnic. You don't have to join the board and the current board members will be available to assist you in the task. The picnic a great opportunity to meet your neighbours, exchange gardening ideas and relax too, knowing that you've accomplished another season of great gardening!
nagagardens@gmail.com

NAGA Website and Blog

We have a website:

<http://nepeanallotmentgarden.yolasite.com>

And a blog too:

<http://nagaottawa.blogspot.ca>.

If you have gardening stories or helpful information, please share it on the blog!

A Note From Our Chair, Mike Chebbo:

Well, it was a weird winter. It blew unseasonably warm and really cold. The lack of snow cover will have been difficult for perennials, including perennial vegetables and fall-planted crops. This summer is supposed to be warm and dry though, which should be good for the heat loving vegetables such as corn and eggplant.

Let's Be Thankful:

In a world of rising prices and cost of basic nutrients, and in a world relying more and more on chemical fertilizers, there is a social responsibility to provide opportunities to Ottawa residents to grow their own food, and to be assured that what they grow is healthy, safe and affordable. We at NAGA share that responsibility with all other community gardens around the City. Being the third largest community garden in Ottawa after Gloucester and Kilborn, we are under constant pressure to grant opportunities to current and future gardeners. This is represented by the influx of emails and telephone calls that our Registrar and myself received even during the cold months!

At the 2016 AGM, we decided to reduce the size limit for all gardeners in an effort to reduce wait times and to allow more families to take advantage of our amazing community garden.

This Past Season:

We bravely took some steps towards two major issues that were stumbling blocks for us for many years: Garbage and Compost. A dedicated team from the Board of NAGA supervised the implementation of "Zero-garbage" policy and "On-your-own site"

composting. I am proud to report there was a huge cooperation from most members and let's keep moving forward this coming season on these two issues.



Good bye and Welcome:

Every year, we say good bye to some and welcome to others, but we always look for new blood, faces and ideas. Kudos to Patricia Avendaño, Lee Coates, Craig Hamm, and Jayne Huntley who did their part of contributions to keep this organization alive and well. The proof is in this newsletter reaching you (I call it Jayne's baby) all and in the past few years of expansion projects towards the west side (I call it Lee's Garden). I invite anyone who is interested in contributing just a little more to this organization to come forward. With these departures from the Board of Directors, we currently have some vacant positions as Directors at Large. I am personally looking to groom someone into the Chair position and I expressed this during last year's AGM. My thinking is that if I was able to do it for the past 9 years, then anyone can do it. Contact me please.

Let's continue our paperless approach in this age of electronic communications:

Along with our Treasurer and Registrar The Board has tasked me to inquire the feasibility of paying our yearly membership fees electronically and we are moving forward with this initiative as soon as we get a reliable banking arrangement. We will keep you posted.

If you are a member in good standing, please continue to come to the AGMs, discuss, share, comment and vote. That is your right

Ron Rogers is the volunteer in charge of planting the beautiful flower beds at the entrance to the parking lot. **Everyone** is encouraged to weed and water these beds, but please do not remove and/or add any plants to the beds. Ron is working on a master plan.



The **AGM** meeting was held on Saturday April 23, 2016 at 1 p.m. at Tanglewood Community Centre, 30 Woodfield Drive.

Here Are Some of the Highlights:

- We thanked **Kazimierz Senkowski** for all his hard work mowing the grass at the NAGA garden over the years. **Ken Medd** has offered to take over the role. Thank-you both!
- We voted in Kaylee McKay as our new Registrar and Amanda Lancaster as a new director at large.
- We voted for a motion that states that starting in the 2017 season, the new maximum allowable garden size will be 900 square feet per household. No household may have more than two perennial gardens.
- We decided to get a farmer to rototill this year before resorting to hiring the city again this year (due to increased costs last year).
- We voted to re-invest our surplus funds in term deposits/GIC
- We voted to purchase a laptop for members of the board to help with their work.

Ron Rogers has volunteered to organize the **Grow a Row** program for the **Food Bank**.

All gardeners are **encouraged to donate** their excess produce too! The produce should be left in the main locked garden shed which will be picked up on

Wednesdays for delivery. If you can help in growing or delivering produce, please contact Ron at rwrogers73@gmail.com.

Taking Vacation This Summer?

If you are going on vacation during the gardening months or have other problems that prevent you from working in your garden, please have somebody help you out during your absence. It could be a family member, but it could also be one of your gardening neighbours.

Getting to Know Your Garden Neighbours has its advantages! Also, 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. To contact the Board, please email: nagagardens@gmail.com

NAGA and Invasive Plants:

All gardeners should be aware of exactly what they are planting, particularly if it is new to them. If you are not careful, you could be leaving a real problem for yourself and other gardeners. Perennials that spread readily can be very difficult to control. The most common plants in this category include Jerusalem artichoke (sunchoke), mint and horseradish. They will grow the next year from even a small piece of root left behind when you harvest. Also, tilling will break up any roots left behind and spread them over your garden. Only grow them in containers with solid bottoms (old 15 litre water containers are good).

Sometimes annuals let go to seed can also become a weed. I grew sun berries a few years ago and am still pulling seedlings. Same thing with tomatillos, ground cherries and tomatoes. Fall cleanup can prevent a lot of problems.

Weed Patrol Update:

The Board of Directors (BOD) of the Nepean Allotment Garden Association (NAGA) reminds all members that garden plots are to be maintained and gardened according to the Terms and Conditions of License (TCL), which is signed by each member. The reasons for enforcing these terms are not arbitrary - they

Spring Clean Up

Thank-you to everyone who came out to the Spring Clean up on Saturday April 30 - you all did a great job!

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.

Since 2012 representatives of the BOD have inspected each garden plot throughout the growing season, and end of season, for clear violations of the TCLs. Because the Board has taken the issue more seriously in the recent past the condition of the garden in 2015 was much improved over previous years.

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 2016 gardening season.**
- **Reduce the member's number of plots.**
- **Issue final notice: The membership in NAGA will be cancelled in 2016 if serious violations of the TCLs persist.**
- **Problems were very bad in 2015, warnings were ignored. 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?

The "Headlands" are the area between the border of your plot and the mowed area beyond the border. They need to be kept trimmed and tidy, just like the mowed areas. Excess soil left on the headlands (by the plow) should be raked back into the garden. Weeds should be pulled. Dumping excess soil outside your garden boundaries is strictly forbidden.

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 and soil are not to be thrown in the paths or laneways.

Theft from Gardens:

Every year the garden struggles with theft of produce from our plots, particularly once the crops become mature and ready for eating. Taking produce from another plot without clear permission from the lease holder of the affected plot is STEALING. It also involves TRESPASSING (going on a plot that is not yours, and without the permission of the plot lease holder). Some people have witnessed cars pulling up in the morning and walking through the garden with a hockey bag (these are very large bags).

If you suspect that someone (a member of the public or another NAGA member) is stealing from a plot, if possible, record the license plate number of the vehicle. Even better, if you have a camera or cell phone at your disposal, take a photograph of the vehicle and its license plate, and try to take a picture of the person (or persons) stealing from the garden. The police

do not advise confronting the offender. Note that if the accused is a NAGA member (it happens, though not frequently), the Board has the right to immediately terminate a membership if there is proof of stealing from another plot.

Fall Plowing Is No More:

After a couple of test years in the east end of the gardens, it was decided to eliminate the fall plowing, and only till the gardens in the spring. This will at least mean that the cost of plowing will be eliminated. to compensate for the increased cost of spring tilling.

Composting on Your Plot:

It's a must!

With the demise of the community composters and piles, composting on your plot is now the way to manage your organic waste.

First, do your weeding early, before the weeds bloom and go to seed. This means that there will be far fewer weeds in your garden next year.

Second, use these weeds as well as vegetable trimmings to control other weeds. Place them in a thick layer between the rows of vegetables. They will dry up and rot down amazingly quickly, meanwhile providing mulch for the garden. Alternatively, build a compost pile in one area of your garden. Cut the waste into manageable pieces before piling. After adding six inches of organic matter, throw a few shovels of soil over it before adding another layer to help it decompose faster. Watering your pile during a dry spell helps too, as well as turning it over occasionally. In the fall, chop the remains of your garden into manageable pieces (6" to 12") and spread it out so it will be ploughed in, providing nutrients for next year.

All fencing, boards, frames, garbage, metal etc. must be removed from annual plots by October 31! Everything that you don't want next year

must be taken home for disposal. Items that you want next year can be stored in the fenced compound behind the wood chip pile. They should be labelled with your name and plot number.

Naga's Garbage Policy:



"All garbage and other waste must be taken home for disposal. There are no exceptions."

This policy is on your rental form as a condition of your renewal.

DO NOT DUMP ANY GARBAGE, ANYWHERE ON THE GARDEN ALLOTMENT GROUNDS.

Please also don't use the city public garbage bins for garden waste - these are intended for items such as food wrappers and coffee cups.

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. Wire fencing such as chicken wire is much preferable because it does not shade your plants or your neighbour's the way the plastic snow fencing does.

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

Talk to your neighbours before putting your fences up. It may be possible for you both to share one fence on the plot line.

Please, consider your neighbours when putting up fences.





Tips, thoughts and tales

Did You Know?

Consider Floating Row Covers.

Many of our seedlings are attacked by insects when they are still very young (striped cucumber beetles anyone?). Many other vegetables such as onions, leeks, carrots and turnip attract worms and maggots that spread disease and burrow into the edible roots. Floating row cover is very light, semi transparent fabric sold in rolls. It can be obtained at garden centres. Cover your planted rows immediately to prevent insects from reaching your plants and laying eggs. Remember to fasten down the sides and ends of your row covers.

Frost Blanket is very like row cover, but heavier and can be used to protect crops from light frosts.

You can also cover plants that need to be pollinated when they are young. Just uncover the rows when the plants start to bloom.

Beware of pests that are already in the soil. Covering the plants doesn't help if the insects are already in the soil around them. You still need to check for things like potato beetles that overwinter underground.

Planting rows closely can help to keep down weeds. Once established, double rows of beans 20 cm apart, double or triple rows of beets and carrots, can easily shade out weeds that would otherwise need to be pulled.

Water the soil, not the leaves. Watering from overhead wastes a lot of water and is less

effective than watering plants at the base. Plants take in water through their roots. Many larger plants have such heavy leaf cover that water applied from overhead doesn't reach the root and is wasted. Also, wet leaves are more prone to diseases, especially if watering is done in the evenings.

Double crop from a cabbage plant? I've been told that if you leave the stem and root of a cabbage plant in the ground when you harvest your cabbage, it will grow again. It was suggested that if you cut the stem vertically in quarters a few inches down, it might grow a new cabbage on each quarter. I accidentally left several stems in the ground last year, and I was getting more little heads growing out of the stem so I suspect that this would work. Nothing to lose!

National Garden Day is held annually on the Friday before Father's Day. It is the beginning of a three day '**Garden Days**' event. For more information, take a look at the website:

<http://www.gardensottawa.org/>

