



Spring 2016

## *Grand Boulevard Ridgeway Residents Association*

The GBRRA represents the neighbourhood to the City, providing a unified voice with a mandate to improve the quality of life in the area.

### **Chair's Report for 2015**

Fiona Walsh

It's been a while since our last Bulletin. Things are changing within the GBRRA. There are a few hot political issues and the disturbing return of the European Chafer beetle.

The GBRRA AGM happened at St. Agnes Church Hall on Sunday, April 19, 2015. After reviewing the last year's events, we held the election of our Executive -- it continues to grow.

On May 23, we held our third annual **Urban Agriculture Workshop** at Loutet Farm. We are so fortunate to have Loutet Farm within our neighbourhood, and to have the help of the Edible Garden Project, who run it. In previous years, they presented part of our workshop and we handled part but last year our Executive presented the whole workshop. Carole Stewart, Dianne Jackson and I demonstrated how to grow tomatoes in a pot, growing mushrooms and even sprouting seeds and making kombucha or milk kefir in your kitchen. We were protected from the elements under the newly-constructed covered area, with a great long table -- just perfect for a workshop. And we had giveaways. We then learned about raising chickens from Evonne Strohwal, who brought one of her hens, named Carter. She was so

gentle that we were able to hold her. Needless to say there were many questions from the 22 participants. We had an organic lunch with ingredients produced on the farm and purchased locally from Sprout Market, and The British Butcher Shoppe. Then we got our hands in the dirt and weeded until 3:00pm with Leslie from the Edible Garden Project. Oliver Harden took great photos and put them on our website, [www.gbrra.org](http://www.gbrra.org), under Archives, May 2015.

The GBRRA Executive also 'manned' the registration table at the **Canada Day Parade** on July 1st. There were over 80 entries taking their assigned spots up and down the boulevard, getting ready for the 10:00 start of the parade.

In the fall of 2015, Executive members became very busy, individually, with political events for the federal election.

**We have decided that 2016, will be the last year that a 'hard copy' of the GBRRA Bulletin will be delivered to your door.** It is much more reasonable to put our Bulletin on our website: [www.gbrra.org](http://www.gbrra.org). We welcome your feedback about this decision. Comment on our website or phone Carole at 604 984 2321.

Our **2016 AGM** will be held at the City Library, in the First Floor meeting room, on April 10, 1:30 - 3:30. Join us for an update and hear plans for the future.



### GBRRA Bee Box

At our AGM in April, 2014, after hearing Ric Erickson tell us about bees in our gardens, the GBRRA Executive became "bee-friendly" bee stewards (see <http://beefriendly.ca/bee-stewards/>) and bought a Native Bee Nesting Box, which was installed in Fiona's backyard in April, 2015. We kept an eye on it and removed about 40 Mason bee pupae in the fall of 2015. We cleaned out the channels of the nesting box, and will put it and the pupae out in April. In 2014, Fiona made a bee box from a 2L carton and over 100 tubes made by wrapping paper around a pencil, but, for various reasons, it failed -- all the pupae were eaten by a crafty little wasp!

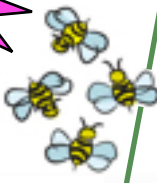
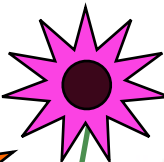
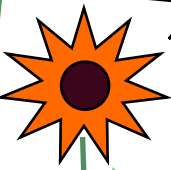
To register for the **Urban Agriculture Workshop**, please email Fiona at [fiona@gbrra.org](mailto:fiona@gbrra.org) or phone 604 980 8436  
 First come, first served. Space is limited.

# GBRRA Urban Agriculture Workshop

**May 28**  
**12-3:00**

**Bring your  
cup, bowl  
and  
utensils**

**Come  
prepared to  
laugh, eat &  
play in the  
dirt!**



at Loutet Farm (east end of 14<sup>th</sup> Street)

I will freely admit that I had not been a big fan of my under-utilized front lawn long before the arrival of the European Chafer beetle larvae and the hordes of crows and raccoons that the tasty little protein snacks attracted. The concept of mowing, weeding, fertilizing, aerating, de-thatching, liming and watering (when permitted) a patch of grass that my kids never played on always seemed a bit pointless to me. My mower was of the non-fossil-fuel-burning, manual kind that doesn't ruin half a block's peace and quiet every time it's being deployed, but there are so many things I'd rather do than mowing a lawn, such as, oh I don't know, doing my tax returns.

When I decided that it was finally time to bid farewell to my front lawn, I downloaded an inexpensive garden design app onto my tablet of choice and, well, designed a garden. I used the drawings in my communication with the local landscaping company I chose and, once we had arrived on a final design, I dug up the lawn. The removal itself went surprisingly smooth (and revealed the amount of beetle larvae present!) – what took most of the time were my attempts to



separate the sod from the green plastic mesh that appears to be used for every lawn installation these days. You can't really throw that stuff in the green yard trimmings, together with the sod, can you?

Said landscaping company then took care of preparing the surface, inserting cedar frames flush with the ground, installation of ornamental grasses and rocks within a bed of soil and mulch, as well as laying down landscaping fabric and creating gravel beds around the planted frames.

The result was a virtually maintenance-free, drought-resistant garden that was easy on the eyes (and ears!), especially during the summer of 2015 with its OMG-will-it-ever-rain-again-level watering restrictions that turned most front yards into desert wastelands from June to October.

The crows and raccoons are still paying visits to our property every once in a while, but only to release sighs of disappointment and then to move on to ravage a nearby front lawn. Maybe it's your turn to get rid of your grass this spring? You'll have lots of time for your tax returns.



European Chafer Beetle Larvae

### Green Necklace extension on Keith Road and Grand Boulevard

Many people have had conversations with decision-makers about the City's plans to complete the Green Necklace in our neighbourhood. Some of the pros revolve around building infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling, while the cons primarily center around the paving of parts of Grand Boulevard to create 2 one-way recreational bike paths, eastside and westside, and improve the center path for other users. Initially, this may not help traffic congestion and intersections may be problematic. We'll wait and see. [Click here](#) for more details, or go to [www.cnv.org](http://www.cnv.org) and follow the links to Parks and Greenways / Green Necklace. Or check out our website: [www.gbrra.org](http://www.gbrra.org)

The GBRRA Executive would like to recognize and support local Grand Boulevard, Ridgeway and Queensbury business owners. Thank you to these members for supporting the GBRRA Bulletin.

To advertise on our website, contact Carole Stewart at 984 2321 or [carole@gbrra.org](mailto:carole@gbrra.org).

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