



# Our Backyard

Volume 10  
Issue 1  
Spring 2010

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

## From The Editor

Darren Copley  
Editor

Contact number 250-475-5579  
or email [darren.copley@saanich.ca](mailto:darren.copley@saanich.ca)

**How can you not like spring?** Chorus Frogs are chorusing, Rufous Hummingbirds are humming (now that they are back), Western Painted Turtle hatchlings are hatching, and bumblebees are buzzing. Even all of you poor allergy sufferers probably can't help forgiving the pollen, when you see the biological wonders of spring. Many of us are rooting around in our yards, weeding and pruning, shopping for seeds, and in general dreaming of our gardening plans for the coming year. For me this includes using the garden not only as a local and organic food source, but as a way to attract wildlife. With the rejuvenating feeling of spring I always want to find new things that will really make a difference to the natural environment. But as I've learned from my years as a public educator, to be successful, actions need to be easy and, have a really obvious impact. A few ideas I've been thinking about are how we get rid of our compostables/yard waste, planting a garden for butterfly babies, and as always, how to deal with invasives.

Everybody likes things to be tidy in their yard, especially when it comes to yard waste. Unfortunately this material often gets dumped in nearby wild space, which is one of the major sources of invasive weeds and pests in our public areas and parks, including garlic mustard and yellow archangel. None of us would do this to our neighbours' gardens, and yet it seems an acceptable practise to dump into public lands. Some easy alternatives are to establish a compost pile in a hidden corner of your own garden, and then use the soil for gardening, and pile your branch clippings on to a pile so birds can use it for habitat. If space is limited, Saanich Public Works Yard will also accept your garden waste. Help spread the word that dumping of garden waste into public lands is unacceptable.

These next two ideas are easy to do, and will also have a large impact for native species. First of all, if you'd like to help our native butterflies, remove your butterfly bush, a plant that is a known invasive, and plant the larval food plant of your favourite native butterfly (Contact me if you require a list). If you have Garry oaks, leave the leaves on the ground to provide habitat for Propertius Duskywings, a butterfly that is endangered in our region. The other idea will help our native birds: modify your bird house to prevent European House Sparrow and Starling from nesting in it. Simply add a modifier, described on page 8, over your existing nest box hole before nesting season, and give our native species a home.

I hope that this newsletter provides you with some helpful stories, as well as showcasing our incredibly active volunteers and charitable organizations. Be sure to nominate one of them for a Saanich Environmental Award (page 7). You can also help the District of Saanich celebrate Earth Day, and the new pesticide bylaw, at our upcoming event (insert). Perhaps one of the easiest, and most effective things you can do to help the natural environment is to mentor someone. Include someone else in your projects — be it a niece, or a university student — and help pass on your passion for nature. If you would like to find out how to become more involved, please contact me, and continue to submit articles for the Summer issue of Our Backyard.



# PURPLE SANICLE RESTORATION PROJECT AT RITHET'S BOG

by Sharon Hartwell

Purple sanicle (*Sanicula bipinnatifida*), a beautiful low-growing perennial bearing pompoms of small purple flowers in April and May, is one of the suite of rare and endangered species supported by Garry oak woodlands. A population of this nationally-rare plant was discovered in 1999 on the dry uplands surrounding Rithet's Bog. Unfortunately, it was in a heavily disturbed area overgrown with broom, blackberry, English hawthorn and non-native grasses.

The Rithet's Bog Conservation Society (RBCS) had been slowly clearing invasives in an attempt to restore the habitat and increase the population of purple sanicle. Now, thanks to Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team funding, we have a formal restoration plan for the site, developed by James Miskelly. RBCS volunteers and Saanich Parks staff have been following this plan since last spring.

Woody invasives were addressed first: all broom and blackberry have been removed and the remaining English hawthorn will be removed this spring. Areas of bare soil exposed by this work have been sown with camas and Indian consumption plant seeds collected by James in nearby areas of the park last fall.

Our next target will be invasive grasses. This spring we will begin cutting out clumps of orchard grass and replacing them with native California brome, California oat grass, and blue wildrye. Rob Hagel at the Pacific Forestry Centre is supporting the project by growing more than 1,000 plugs of these native grasses, all sown from seeds collected on site by James.

We could use help with this work! If you would like to assist, we will be holding planting parties on the first Sunday of each month. We may also schedule additional sessions to get all the plugs in the ground before they outgrow their flats. For more information my email is [shartwell@shaw.ca](mailto:shartwell@shaw.ca).

## Youngsters, Mothers, and Investors Help TLC Reach Madrona Goal

by The Land Conservancy

The Land Conservancy's campaign to save Madrona Farm for future food security is inspiring support from everywhere. From elementary school students and their families to business investors, the donations keep coming in. Having received another 60-day extension from the current landowners, TLC now only has \$224,000 left to raise by the new May 15, 2010 deadline. Success is just around the corner, thanks to continued support of all levels from the community.

In the last two months, TLC has received tremendous public support for Madrona, reducing the amount left to raise from \$730,000 to \$224,000. "Everyday there's another nice surprise," says TLC Executive Director Bill Turner. "This morning it was notice of a stock transfer totalling \$12,000 and the crucial support in gifts of \$100 to \$1,000 continues to bring us closer and closer to our goal. "All we need now is a little more time to pull the final pieces together. I'm confident given this high level of support; that we will protect Madrona as a local community resource for generations to come."

Helping to plant the seeds of success for Madrona Farm have been students like Jamison from St. Michael's University Junior School. Ten-year-old Jamison, who first encouraged the school's Environmental and Service Clubs to get on board with TLC's campaign, cited the recent earthquake in Haiti: "What if that happened here?" says Jamison. With Vancouver Island growers producing about only 10% of the food Islanders consume, that means the other 90% has to be shipped. In the event of a large scale natural disaster, that 90% could be drastically reduced. Jamison's comment acknowledges the fact that citizens need to take a proactive approach to food security. With this concern in mind he asked his mom, Wendy, about getting his school involved. Together, the students have collected more than \$600 for Madrona. This is one of many examples throughout TLC's fundraising campaign of people taking the issue of food security into their own hands and stepping up to help.

Located 10 minutes from downtown Victoria on rich soils at the foot of Mount Douglas Park, Madrona Farm provides food to more than 3,500 homes in the Greater Victoria area. The 27-acre farm produces 105 different crops, 12 months a year. Hundreds of customers visit the farm stand each week, local chefs rely on the farm for fresh vegetables, and food banks and shelters receive donations from Madrona. The race is on to secure Madrona Farm as an innovative model for sustainable agriculture. Once protected, David and Nathalie Chambers will have the first long-term lease to continue farming while providing education and training for apprentices.

Join TLC and make your donation today at:

[www.conservancy.bc.ca/madrona](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/madrona)

[www.madronfarm.com](http://www.madronfarm.com)

1-877-485-2422



# Care of the Gorge

by Lia Chalifour

A water quality monitoring program on the Gorge Waterway

Offered by The Gorge Waterway Discovery Centre in Esquimalt Gorge Park

## Our goals:

1. To create stronger ties between urban youth and the environment they live in, and provide deeper understanding of what constitutes healthy aquatic and marine ecosystems.
2. To increase awareness of the health of the Gorge Waterway Ecosystem, and initiate an ongoing community-based monitoring program for the Gorge.

## Program summary:

This dynamic program provides an opportunity for participants to learn about their local watershed through a combination of hands-on activities and technology, with support from biologists from the Gorge Waterway Discovery Centre and students from Camosun College Environmental Technology Program. The program focuses on the marine and freshwater ecosystems of the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet, helping participants identify problems facing this heavily impacted urban watercourse and learning ways these can be mitigated. High school and middle school students and other program participants learn to actively monitor the water quality and aquatic life in Gorge Creek and at several sites along the Gorge Waterway. They have the opportunity to learn techniques and use instruments that field biologists use to conduct environmental monitoring. Students will analyze the data they and others in the program have collected, and look for trends over time. They can use this information to make predictions about seasonal trends, and recommendations about ways to improve the health of their urban watersheds. Results will be posted on the Gorge Waterway Discovery Centre website. Repeat visits are recommended for participants to make observations and record data over a period of time. The program has already begun with participation from Shoreline Middle School and Esquimalt High.

For more information:

Contact the Gorge Waterway Discovery Centre at [education@worldfish.org](mailto:education@worldfish.org) or phone: 250-380-7585 (World Fisheries Trust office)





***Our Backyard now features a regular update about Saanich's Garry Oak Restoration Project. This update replaces the GORP newsletter, GoRestore.***

*by Marian McCoy,*

*GORP Program Leader and Saanich Parks Natural Areas Technician*

***What is GORP?***

A lot of people are already familiar with GORP, but for those who aren't, here's a new spin on an old acronym.

For the past ten years, the District of Saanich has been partnering with volunteers, researchers, and ecological professionals to undertake restoration, stewardship, and education projects at Camas, Chatterton Hill, Mahon Brook, Little Mt Doug, Feltham, Mt Doug summit, Mt Tolmie, Playfair, and Wetherby Parks — nine sites in all. Each one is or was a remnant of Garry oak ecosystem, and each one offers unique challenges and opportunities.

***Who runs GORP?***

Originally, Saanich's Environmental Services department has been managing GORP, guided by members of a Steering Committee that provides links to academic institutions and other specialists, with Saanich Parks playing a supporting role. This relationship has worked well. Now Parks has taken on the leadership role.

GORP now falls under the responsibility of Cory Manton. As Manager of Urban Forestry, Horticulture, and Natural Areas, Cory is also Chair of the GORP Steering Committee. As Natural Areas Technician, I'm responsible for the daily leadership of GORP along with more than 60 other volunteer stewardship events each year.

The goals of GORP are the same as those of our other restoration efforts in Saanich parks — improving the ecological integrity of our natural areas through community involvement, education, and of course all that sweat-inducing action on the ground.

***Who does the dirty work?***

Jenny Eastman, our Coordinator of Volunteers, has a long history as a naturalist, working with volunteers at CRD and other organizations. Jenny attends each work party and keeps our many volunteers trained, organized, fed, and watered. In addition, other Saanich staff attend work parties to provide tools, remove plant material, share expertise, and gain experience.

But it's our volunteers who get the most dirt under their fingernails. Each GORP site is overseen by a Site Steward, who keeps field logs and reports on problems or changes observed. Each year, the Site Stewards and a corps of other volunteers work tirelessly to remove tons of invasive plant material and move many wheelbarrow-loads of heavy leaf mulch. The promise of cookies, juice, and sometimes hot coffee is an added incentive (thanks Jenny).

We're always looking for more volunteers, especially people with ecological expertise. To get involved, contact Saanich Parks at 250-475-5539 or email me at [marian.mccoy@saanich.ca](mailto:marian.mccoy@saanich.ca)

***So, what are we up to this spring?***

Most of our work continues to focus on invasive species removal, experimental treatments, monitoring, and species inventories. Some informal experiments for controlling orchard grass are underway at Playfair Park. Next time you're there, keep an eye out for multi-coloured flags in the GORP site (behind the split-rail fence) that mark out special treatment areas.

There are usually two GORP work parties per month, held on Saturdays. The next work parties are Saturday April 10th at Wetherby Park, and Saturday April 24th at Mahon Brook.

***Over the fence but not out of sight***

One of those challenges that I mentioned above is dealing with the dumping of residential yard waste "over the fence". This is a problem at GORP sites and at most of our Natural Area parks. Seeing native plants and habitat buried by piles of grass clippings, dog waste, and last year's hanging basket plants can be pretty demoralizing for our volunteers, not to mention being bad for whatever gets buried.

If you have the opportunity to meet any park neighbours, please let them know that Saanich offers a wonderful, FREE, garden waste drop-off program at our Works Yard location at 1040 McKenzie. For more information on that, go to <http://www.saanich.ca/resident/utilities/gardenwaste.html>.

To find out more about GORP and to stay tuned on upcoming events, check out the website at [www.gorp.saanich.ca](http://www.gorp.saanich.ca)

# Calling all volunteers: *It's garlic mustard blitz time!*

Not only is it spring, it's also time to help remove garlic mustard from natural areas in Saanich parks. Please join Saanich staff and volunteers to help remove this invasive plant. This year we'll be focusing on Mt Douglas Park and Layritz Park.

For those of you who are new to it, garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) was introduced to North America as a pot-herb and has since become a serious invasive weed in natural areas in eastern Canada and the US, and now here. For those of you who are returning for a second or third year, you'll see that your efforts have been worthwhile. The density of garlic mustard has definitely decreased, thanks to your hard work.



Garlic mustard was first noted in Mount Douglas Park in 2004 and this small population quickly spread. In the spring of 2007, volunteers removed 34 large garbage bags of garlic mustard in a single work party! Volunteers removed several bags from Layritz Park in 2009, and Saanich Parks has been working on a large population in Playfair Park as well.

## *Work parties*

There will be work parties at Mount Douglas Park every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, starting Thursday April 1st from 10 AM to noon. Work parties will continue until...well...until the garlic mustard is gone, we hope by mid-May.

Volunteers should meet at the Glendenning Road parking lot about 10 minutes before 10 AM. You'll be met by Judy Spearing, who will lead you up Glendenning Trail to Harrop Trail as a starting area. If you prefer to walk in from another direction (e.g., Whittaker Trail/Cedar Hill Road), you can meet the group at the junction of Whittaker and Glendenning around 10:00-10:05.

To sign up for Mount Douglas Park garlic mustard activities, please contact Judy Spearing at [jandd\\_spearing@shaw.ca](mailto:jandd_spearing@shaw.ca) or call 250-472-0515.

There will be work parties at Layritz every Wednesday and Friday morning from 9:30 to 11:30 AM starting Wednesday April 7th (after the long weekend). Meet at the Layritz Avenue parking lot at 9:20.

To sign up for Layritz park garlic mustard events, please contact Marian McCoy at Saanich Parks [marian.mccoy@saanich.ca](mailto:marian.mccoy@saanich.ca) or call 250-475-5522.

## *What to wear, what to bring*

Safety is number one, so long pants, socks and gloves are mandatory. Sorry, no sandals, flip-flops, or other open style footwear. Bring gloves, a hat, sunscreen, and raingear if needed. Snacks and drinks will be provided but please bring your own as well, especially water.

Please join us when you can!

### **Saanich Parks**

<http://www.saanich.ca/resident/parks/index.html>

**250-475-5522**

# Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

by The Invasive Plant Council of BC

Invasive plants are spreading through our region's natural ecosystems, urban landscapes, and agricultural lands at an alarming rate. They have the potential to have detrimental impacts on humans, animals, and our ecosystems. Yellow flag iris is one example of an invasive plant that is still sold widely in nurseries and is becoming increasingly difficult to control. Originally introduced as a garden ornamental from Europe, Asia, and Africa, this invasive plant lacks natural pathogens or predators to keep its populations controlled here.

Yellow flag iris reproduces quickly and aggressively through seed dispersal and horizontal root systems. Several plants can be connected by rhizomes under the water. These root fragments can form a root-like mat that collects sediment, severely reducing water flow, and increasing stream bank erosion. These invaders can out-compete native wetland species in these sensitive natural ecosystems and reduce the quality of fish habitats. This species can also sicken animals when digested and can cause skin irritations through contact with the toxic resins.

Yellow flag iris has showy yellow flowers with three petals pointing upwards. This invasive iris can be distinguished from other ornamental iris's because it only grows in or near water and is considered wet-footed. It is a perennial with sword-like leaves that fold and clasp the stem at the base and stand bent at the top, growing up to 1.5 meters in height. Infestations can be found in riparian areas of low -to mid- elevations, growing in ditches, irrigation canals, marshes, streams, and ponds.

If yellow flag iris plants are found growing in a pond, ditch, lake edge, or other wet area on or near your property, remove them as soon as possible. Small plants can be pulled or dug up, but for larger patches, clip the seed heads off in July initially to prevent further spread and then follow up with manual treatment. It will take several years of treatment to completely control an infestation, so be persistent. Be careful: this plant has toxic resin, so wear gloves when handling it. After ensuring all plant parts are removed, dispose of yellow flag iris by placing it in thick garbage bags and take to a landfill. Do not compost yellow flag iris plants, as they can easily reproduce through small root fragments and start growing in your compost pile.

Yellow flag iris can be replaced with other wetland alternatives in your garden. Some native plant alternatives include: cattail (*Typha latifolia*), skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) and yellow monkey-flower (*Mimulus guttatus*), while other iris species include: *Iris ensata*, *laevigata*, and *robusta*. Consult your local nursery for recommendations on non-invasive, and preferably native, alternative plants.

Please help stop the spread, and report any new infestations by contacting the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee (CIPC) at 250-857-2472, email: [info@coastalinvasiveplants.com](mailto:info@coastalinvasiveplants.com) or call the Provincial "weed hotline" at 1-888-WEEDS-BC. For more information on invasive plants and the Coastal Invasive plant Committee, check out our website at: [coastalinvasiveplants.com](http://coastalinvasiveplants.com).



## NEW Pesticide Bylaw

On January 25, 2010 Council adopted a new bylaw to regulate pesticide use.

***This means that residential pesticide use will generally no longer be permitted on lawns and gardens.***

The effective date of the Pesticide Bylaw is May 1, 2010.

Visit [www.pesticide.saanich.ca](http://www.pesticide.saanich.ca) for more information on:

- The pesticide bylaw
- Pesticide alternatives
- Permitted pesticides
- Non-permitted pesticides
- Pesticide disposal options
- Bylaw enforcement
- Other resources

Look for your fact sheet in the mail soon!  
visit [www.pesticide.saanich.ca](http://www.pesticide.saanich.ca) or call 250-475-5471

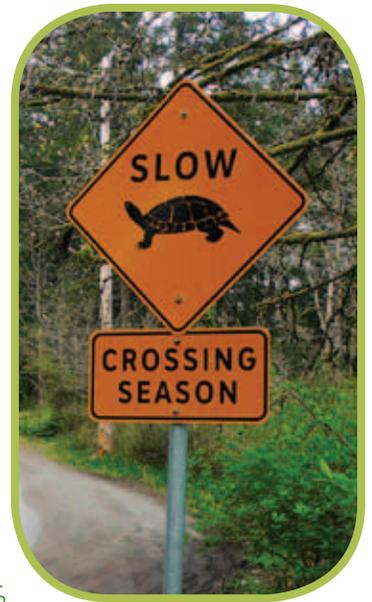
# TURTLE SIGN

by Habitat Acquisition Trust

In each of the past three years endangered Western Painted Turtle hatchlings have been run over by cars on Beaver Lake Road. The District of Saanich and Habitat Acquisition Trust are working together to come up with a solution to save these turtles as they move from their nesting sites back to the ponds.

Signs alerting motorists to slow down were erected in March 2010 along the road, and Saanich engineering is monitoring traffic before and after the sign installation to determine the effect of the signs on speed.

Park visitors entering Beaver Lake Regional Park via Beaver Lake Road will be interviewed, and HAT staff and volunteers will continue to monitor turtle mortality on the road. Your sightings are vital! If you see a turtle on Beaver Lake Road, or any other location in the CRD, please email [hatmail@hat.bc.ca](mailto:hatmail@hat.bc.ca), or call 250-995-2428.



## 2010 Saanich Environmental Awards Nominations Now Open!

Do you know a group, individual or business that has made an outstanding contribution to the natural environment in Saanich? If so, please consider nominating them for a Saanich Environmental Award. Awards are made in seven categories: Individual, Business/Commercial, Volunteer Organization, Youth Group/School, Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainability, and Long-term Achievement.

Awards will be presented to the winners at the first Council meeting in June. Winners receive a framed certificate and have their names added to a permanent plaque at Saanich Hall.

Nominations will be accepted until April 30, 2010. For more information and to make an online nomination, please visit the Saanich website at [www.saanich.ca](http://www.saanich.ca) or:

[www.saanich.ca/resident/environment/enviro\\_awards.html](http://www.saanich.ca/resident/environment/enviro_awards.html)

## Thought for Food

By Norm Mogenson

If you have increasing concerns about local food security, have you developed a plan yet to optimize food production at home? It may be a very good thing for you to learn to grow and preserve food. Do you have food plants growing in locations where they may flourish with optimum sunshine and moisture? If not, maybe you could create a new plan on a scale drawing of the unbuilt spaces on your lot. Identify unavoidable shade zones (from buildings, fences, your trees and trees you don't control, etc.) and the approximate hours of sunshine that falls on each zone within your garden. Map your soil patches and their types and quality. Make a list of what fruits and berries, nuts, and vegetables you could grow that, in combination, might provide a nearly balanced diet. Determine how much sunshine and moisture each type of plant needs and then begin to lay out your new garden plan. Some of what you grow now (ornamentals) may not help you pass the food sustainability test! And keep in mind that what you replace them with can also be aesthetically pleasing.

Water shortages may also be on our horizon, so consider your annual garden water requirements for the kind of plants you wish to grow (centimetres of water per week X area size, less average seasonal rainfalls) and estimate the volume of stored water needed for your garden. Maybe it is time we consider installing water cisterns for capturing the rainwater we need to sustain food production.

Ensure that what you grow in your back yard is grown organically, so both you and the environment do not suffer ill effects from eating it.

And finally, if you just can not grow food at your home, consider participating in a community allotment garden.

# invasive birds in your backyard

by Malcolm Rodin

Introduced English House Sparrows are a significant issue in our region, and their success is being facilitated by well-meaning individuals.

The House Sparrow was introduced to help reduce insect pests to agriculture. Unfortunately, as with most introduced species, this bird causes more harm than good. Non-native House Sparrows eat seeds and tender young veggie greens, so they can be a bane to the gardener, but of more importance is their impact to native cavity-nesting birds. Cavity-nesting birds typically use old woodpecker nests in trees, or in an urban setting they rely heavily on birdhouses. House Sparrows nest early, and often claim these available nesting sites for themselves, leaving limited nesting opportunities available to beneficial native insect-eating birds such as Violet-green and Tree Swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, House Wren, and Bewick's Wrens. The House Sparrow is known to evict native species from their nests, destroying eggs, young, and even adult birds. Charming-looking bird nesting boxes of every dimension are quickly taken over by this invasive species, when all it would take would be to modify the entrance hole to only allow native species to use the boxes.

Please see our web site and YouTube video on how to make the oval hole. If you do not have a computer to view this free information you can call me at 250-812-6461, or see below.

The web page is <http://members.shaw.ca/swallows/> and my email address is [swallows@shaw.ca](mailto:swallows@shaw.ca)

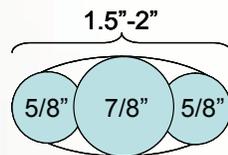


Introduced female House Sparrow

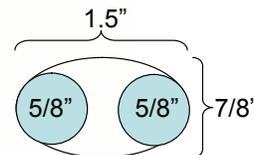
## **Making the invasive House Sparrow-resistant entrance holes**

Use 3/4" thick piece of hardwood or plastic wood, and place over existing hole.

Option 1: Drill 7/8" and 5/8" holes (Forstner bits work well). Trim out the remaining bits with a file and then sand (do not exceed the 7/8" in height).



Option 1



Option 2

Option 2: Measure 1 1/2" across then drill two 5/8" holes on each end. Measure 7/8" height in the middle and draw an oval shape. Cut inside of this line with a coping saw, then file and sand to 7/8". It is okay to be wider than 1 1/2".

Option 3: Templates are available by donation from the Victoria Natural History Society ([members@vicnhs.bc.ca](mailto:members@vicnhs.bc.ca))

## Victoria Natural History Society

[www.naturevictoria.ca](http://www.naturevictoria.ca)

### Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

#### Amphibian Declines

Tuesday, Apr. 13, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

Dr. Purnima Govindarajulu's talk examines global amphibian declines in the context of amphibians in BC, assessing status, threats, and potential conservation measures.

### Botany Night (every 3rd Tues.)

#### Lichen and Moss Communities of Garry Oak Bark

Tuesday, Apr. 20, 7:30 pm

Swan Lake Nature House

Camosun College students will present results of their study of epiphyte distributions on Garry oak trunks.

### Birding Rithet's Bog (Guided Walk)

Sunday, April 25, 9am

Join us for a birding walk along the loop trail around the bog. Rails and resident Anna's Hummingbirds, migrating teal, wetland-loving warblers, and swallows are all possibilities. Meet near the corner of Chatterton Way and Dalewood Lane, south of the Broadmead shopping centre.

### Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

#### The 1700 Earthquake and Tsunami in Nootka Sound

Monday, Apr. 26, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

Stephen Holland, a retired science teacher, reconstructed the events of a mid-winter night, when a mega-earthquake and tsunami turned thriving villages into barren beaches.

### Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

#### Birds of Peru

Wednesday, Apr. 28, 7:30 pm

David Strong Building, Room C103

Journey from the Pacific shores to the High Andes then down into the Amazon Basin.

## Gorge Waterway Discovery Centre

[www.worldfish.org/gwdc.htm](http://www.worldfish.org/gwdc.htm) 250-380-7585

*Open Sundays (11am-4pm) in Esquimalt Gorge (Kinsmen) Park. Admission is by donation, and programs can be booked during the week*

### Environmental Education Week

Sunday, April 11 from 1-3pm

Help us celebrate this year's theme: Be Water and Energy Wise, with special educational displays and programs offered by the GWDC, Sierra Club, Galiano Conservancy and more.

### World Oceans Day Celebration

Sunday, June 6, 1-3pm

Canoe trips, interpretive walks, face painting, crafts, items for sale and more! Get an up-close look at local marine animals.

## Swan Lake

### Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca) 250-479-0211

### 15th Annual Spring Native Plant Sale

Sat.-Sun. Apr. 17-18, 9am-3pm

You can be kind to wildlife by adding some native plants to your garden. Featuring more than 6,000 plants of over 120 species, displays on native plant gardening and attracting wildlife, and native plant gardening experts. Admission is \$2. Complete plant list is available at [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)

### Astronomy Day

Saturday, April 24, 10am-4pm

Solar observing, model solar system, exhibits on telescopes, mirror making, strophotography, and out-of-this-world crafts for astro-kids of all ages.

### Wildflower Weekend

Sunday, April 25, 12- 3pm

We celebrate the wonderful world of wildflowers with native plant garden tours, hikes to Christmas Hill, and crafts for kids.

### Guided Bird Walks

Every Wednesday and Sunday, 9 am

Meet in the parking lot.

#### Birding Rithet's Bog (Guided Walk)

Sunday, April 25, 9am

Join us for a birding walk along the loop trail around the bog. Rails and resident Anna's Hummingbirds, migrating teal, wetland-loving warblers, and swallows are all possibilities. Meet near the corner of Chatterton Way and Dalewood Lane, south of the Broadmead shopping centre.

## Native Plant Study Group

[www.npsg.ca](http://www.npsg.ca)

### Edible and Medicinal Plants of Canada

Thursday, April 15, 7pm

UVic, MacLaurin Bldg, Rm D-116

Andy MacKinnon is well known for his book "Plants of Coastal British Columbia", an essential guide for any BC native plant enthusiast. Author of five plant identification guides, Andy joins us to talk about his new book "Edible and Medicinal Plants of Canada". Drop-in fee: \$3

## CRD Regional Parks

### Spring Programs in Saanich

www.crd.bc.ca/parks 250-478-3344

### Moss Landscapes (Guided Walk)

Saturday, Apr 10, 1-2:30pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Join guest naturalist, Kem Luther for a lecture and walk to practice moss identification skills. Pre-register by April 8 (Adults Only)

### Spring has Sprung (Drop-in Event)

Saturday, Apr 17, 11am-2pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Enjoy exhibits, crafts and activities that celebrate spring, as well as guided walks throughout the day. Meet at the Beaver Lake parking lot.

### Forest Tea Party (Guided Walk)

Saturday, Apr 24, 1-3pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Join in an interpretive tea tasting, and walk, featuring some of our local plants. Pre-registration required.

### Introduction to Plants that Heal (Course)

Thu. & Tue., May 6 & 11, 6:30-8:30pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Have you wanted to learn more about plants in our area and their uses but weren't sure where to start? Pre-register by April 27 (15 years +). \$15/person

### Winged Migration - International Migratory Bird Day! (Special Drop-in Event)

Saturday, May 8, 8am-3pm

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (Metchosin)

Celebrate the return of our feathered friends! Join CRD Regional Parks, Rocky Point Bird Observatory and the Victoria Natural History Society for this day-long event. Bird watching, children's activities, bird-banding demonstrations, presentations guided bird walks, and more. BC Transit #54 or #55

### Big and Tall, Short and Small (Guided Walk)

Sunday, May 9, 1-2:30pm

Francis/King Regional Park

Walk along with a park interpreter on this exploration of nature's big and small. Meet at the Nature Centre off Munn Road.

### Morning Mist Canoe Adventure (Guided Paddle)

Saturday, June 5 or 12, 8-11am

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided and no experience is necessary. You must pre-register. Adult \$15/Child \$8.50.

### Early Evening Canoeing (Guided Paddle)

Monday, June 7, 18 or 21, 6-9pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Canoe equipment and instruction are provided and no experience is necessary. You must pre-register. Adult \$15/Child \$8.50.

## Saanich Recreation Free Programs

www.saanich.ca/resident/recreation 250-475-5408

### Trails & Treks (Drop-in Events)

Discover the beauty of Saanich parks and trails. These FREE guided hikes are open to adults of all ages. Check the website for meeting locations. Carry adequate drinking water and wear sturdy footwear.

### Sunday Hikes 1-3:30pm

Karen Reid & Penny Stevens

- April 11 Strawberry Vale & Knockan Hill
- May 16 McMinn Park – Kentwood – Otterbridge
- June 13 Blenkinsop Lake – Lower Mt. Doug
- July 11 Konukson Park to Phyllis Park

### Capital City Discovery Walks

Wednesdays, 9-11am

Meet at designated location at 9:00am and we will carpool to site.

- April 28 Gore Park & Oak Haven Park
- May 26 Thetis Lake & Seymour Hill
- June 30 Gowland Ridge Top Trail
- July 28 Saxe Point Park – Highrock Cairn Park

### Gentle Walk & Talk with Karen Reid

Thursdays, 9:30-11am

- April 8 Rithet's Bog to Parkwood
- April 15 Selkirk to Cecelia Ravine
- April 22 Mt. Tolmie to Henderson Rec Centre
- April 29 Knockan Hill
- May 6 Cadboro Gyro Park to Konukson Park
- May 13 Cedar Hill Chip Trail
- May 20 Finnerty Gardens
- May 27 Layritz to Quick's Bottom
- June 3 Arbutus Cove Park to Hollydene

### Saanich Seniors Gardening Group - FREE

Join anytime and help maintain (and harvest) a cooperatively run organic fruit and vegetable garden plot in the Capital City Allotment Gardens, 641 Kent Rd. off Carey Rd. To register call 250-475-5408.

## Saanich's Earth Day Pesticide Bylaw Celebration

When: Earth Day, Thursday April 22nd, 12:00pm-1:00pm

Where: Middleton Plaza, Saanich Hall 770 Vernon Avenue, (in front of the main entrance)

Help Saanich celebrate the adoption of our new pesticide bylaw. Acting Mayor, Saanich Councillor Vic Derman, will be kicking off the festivities!

The event will feature:

- Organic gardening displays
- Ask-a-gardening expert
- Ask-an-arborist
- Pesticide-free lunch
- Great local music

For more information, contact Darren Copley at 250 475-5579 or [Darren.Copley@saanich.ca](mailto:Darren.Copley@saanich.ca)