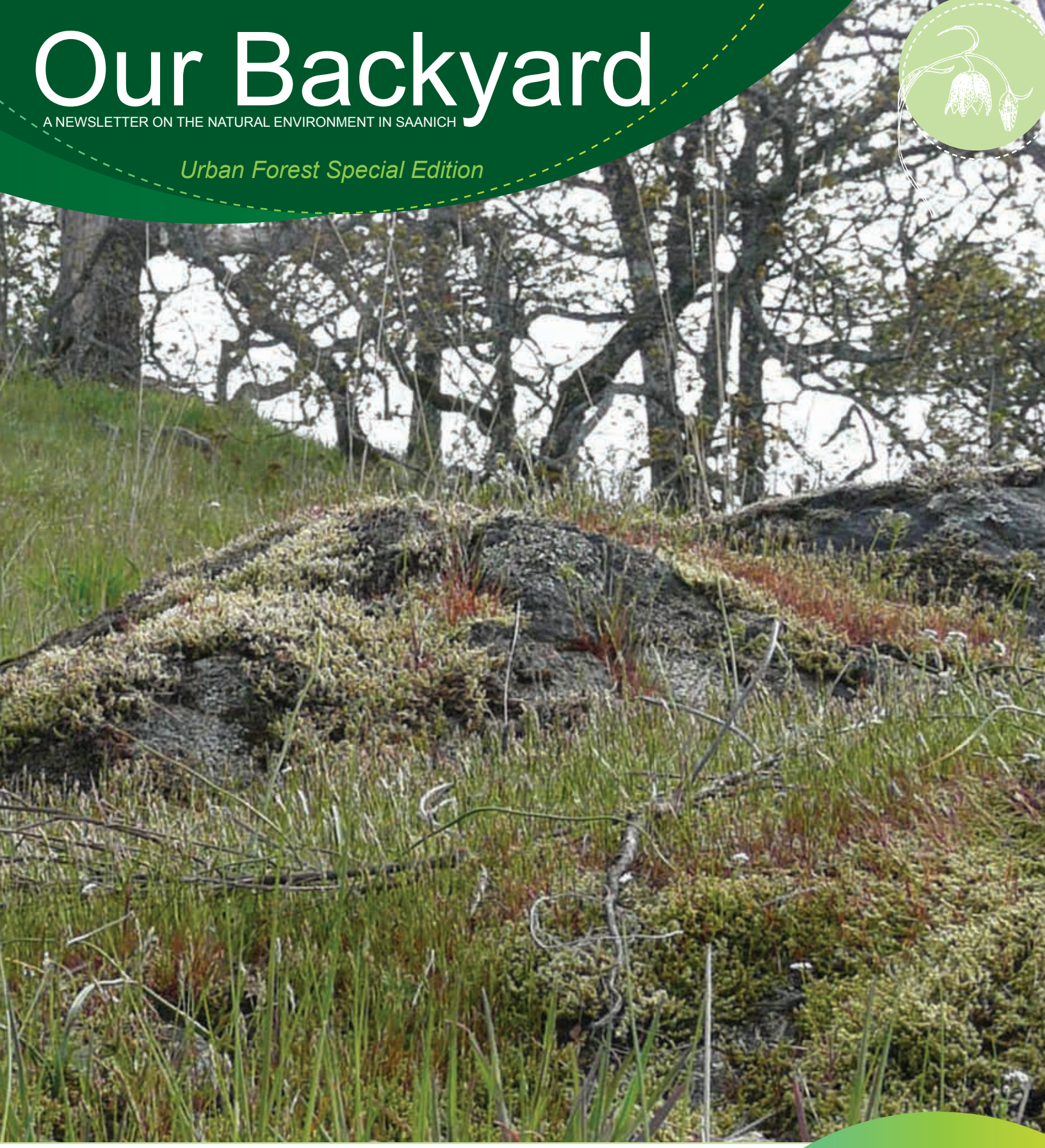
Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

Urban Forest Special Edition



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Saanich

Urban Forest Good Neighbours Project

By Adam Taylor, Executive Director Habitat Acquisition Trust
www.hat.bc.ca | phone: 250-995-2428 | email: hatmail@hat.bc.ca

People care about trees, but we don't always care for our trees. Whether its frustration with oak leaves, concerns about tent caterpillars, or uncertainty about what the tree needs to stay healthy, there are lots of questions about trees. Sometimes people also encounter problems when it comes to selecting a new tree for their yard. There are lots of considerations, including what trees will grow well in that spot, and what and how much care to give the tree – every tree and spot are different! Being a good neighbour to natural areas, whether they are in parks or not, and a good steward to trees can make a big difference to wildlife and people in the community.

This spring and summer, Habitat Acquisition Trust will be hosting the Urban Forest Good Neighbours project. This project will help residents of Saanich, Victoria, Oak Bay, and other urban communities in Greater Victoria find ways to meet their needs for their property while also caring for the environment.

How to Get Involved:

1. Contact us for a free, confidential home visit with one of our biologists. During the visit, the biologist will explore the parts of your property that you want help with. Afterwards, they will prepare a personalized "land care prescription" for you.
2. Want more information, but not ready for a visit? We'll send you a land care package with information about common problems and questions. Let us know if there is a specific issue or question you want addressed.
3. Want to get some hands-on experience or help out? HAT will be hosting demonstration projects – we don't have details yet, but you can keep an eye on our website www.hat.bc.ca for information, or contact us anytime.

To book your land care visit, for a free land care package, or to find out about events in your community contact HAT.

About Habitat Acquisition Trust

Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) is a regional, non-profit land trust that works to conserve nature on south Vancouver Island. Since being founded in 1996 by the Victoria Natural History Society, HAT has worked with residents to help them find ways to conserve nature at home. HAT's Good Neighbours projects have won numerous awards since it launched in 2001, including the CRD Ecostar Award and the HCTF Silver Award for Stewardship.

After The Broom Is Gone...
Then What?
Restoration Of Garry Oak Ecosystems

By Dave Polster
Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) Co-chair

Restoration of Garry Oak ecosystems (GOEs) is a complex process. However, often the first step in the restoration of GOEs is the removal of woody invasive species: Scotch Broom, English Hawthorn, Holly, Ivy, Daphne, Blackberry, and others. Where do we go after the hard work of woody invasives removal is done? In many cases, GOEs have been used for agricultural purposes and the non-native grasses they were seeded with (Orchardgrass, Velvet Grass and others) create problems for restoration. These species can choke out the native forbs such as Camas, and create a weedy mess. Many of the problems of invasive grasses in GOEs stems from the fact that these ecosystems used to be burned by First Nations. Of course burning GOEs in urban areas would not be popular, so mowing at the right time of year (just after the Camas and other GOE forbs have gone to seed in late July or early August) can reduce the growth of invasive grasses and encourage native species. In addition, planting in seedlings of native grasses can help increase the competition against the introduced species. Maintaining these processes for years can shift degraded GOEs towards restored health.

Garry Oak ecosystems are anthropogenic ecosystems, particularly those that occur on deep soils. That is, unless they are maintained either through historic Camas harvesting activities and regular burning or by regularly mowing, they will morph into dry Douglas-fir ecosystems. However, regular mowing at the appropriate time of year (late July or early August) can help to ensure that the ecosystem is maintained for the beautiful forbs that give this ecosystem its appeal. In addition, where Scotch Broom has been present for many years, seeds in the soil seed bank will continue to germinate over the years and will need to be addressed. It is often most effective to allow new Scotch Broom seedlings to grow for several years so that the natural die-off can be used to reduce the amount of broom that needs to be removed. Any broom that is larger than a pencil in diameter should be cut rather than pulled. Cut the stems just below the soil surface and cover the cut stump with a bit of leaf litter so that it is shaded and it will not re-sprout. Smaller broom plants can be pulled in the winter when the soils are moist and the plants can be slipped out of the soil without causing significant soil disturbance.

The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team website (www.goert.ca) has a wealth of information on the restoration of GOEs.

Garry oak ecosystems recovery team
www.goert.ca

A Lifeline for Our Rarest Species

The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) was formed in 1999 to coordinate efforts to protect and restore endangered Garry oak and associated ecosystems and the species at risk that inhabit them.

Today, less than 5% of Garry oak ecosystems remain in a near-natural condition. The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team is working to save these endangered species and the habitats they need for survival.

Eventually, we hope that plants and animals now at risk in Garry oak and associated ecosystems will be out of danger and their long-term survival ensured.

The district of Saanich is a long-standing member and supporter of GOERT, and would like to thank them for their important work protecting and restoring Garry Oak ecosystems.

Wildlife Trees

By Jay Rastogi,
Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

When my mentor Henry Koch at the University of Guelph Arboretum bought his property the backyard was a lawn. The first thing he planted were 3 dead trees. As I recall they were about 6 to 8 inches in diameter and about 12 to 15 feet tall – probably the maximum his roof racks could handle. This might seem like strange behaviour, but it goes to show how, in the face of scientific evidence, even a fourth generation Dutch horticulturalist can change ways and embrace the value of dead trees. Henry was trying to attract birds and insects so that the lawn would become a more complex ecosystem.

Of course all trees are used by wildlife, but the term 'Wildlife Tree' is usually applied only to those that have special attributes which make them a bit more rare and precious or particularly useful to wildlife. Trees with dead tops make great perch sites for larger birds such as eagles. Those with broken tops are frequently used for nesting by birds such as Osprey, eagles, and hawks. Trees with flaking bark attract insects, which in turn attract insect eating birds. Some birds such as Brown Creepers will nest under the flaking bark. Bats also roost under bark's protective cover, especially under the thick slabs of flaking old-growth Douglas-fir bark. Bats will also use trees with long hollow cavities as roosting and maternal colony sites. Many birds excavate cavities to nest in or use cavities created by others.

Woodpeckers are the quintessential animal associated with wildlife trees. The prowess of the Pileated Woodpecker for chiseling holes in trees for feeding is evident by the big rectangular cavities they create to go after Carpenter Ants in Western Redcedar trees. For nesting, they create a round hole, just large enough to fit through. From a utilitarian perspective this might be seen as damage. But it is this "damage" which creates an avenue for fungal infections to take hold and create pockets of rot which can then be excavated by cavity nesting birds. From an ecosystem function perspective this "damage" and "disease" is in fact necessary for healthy ecosystem functioning. Perhaps it is our language and cultural baggage that unfortunately gives these words a negative connation. The way we think about things usually influences the way we respond. Looking at nature from an ecological viewpoint provides a richer perspective on the balance and flux of nature.

The Fisherman

By June Pretzer, Uncover Your Creeks Coordinator, Evergreen
www.uncoveryourcreek.ca

That Belted Kingfisher has his eye on the water surface below. From his perch in the alders, he can see the fish just below the surface. Any second now he's going to dash down and get himself dinner. *You might ask yourself; where would that kingfisher sit if there were no trees?*

Trees and shrubs that grow along streams, lakes, or shores make up the riparian area. This treed area provides ecological services like water retention, flood control, oxygen, corridors, wild life habitat, nesting areas, energy transfer, a sense of well-being, and kingfisher perches.

In Saanich where many of us live, numerous streams are culverted or underground. That means that where streams are above ground riparian areas need to be healthy. At Whitehead Park on Tod Creek we pull out invasive blackberry, plant native trees and shrubs; remove Yellow Flag Iris and plant sedges and rushes. Slowly the riparian area is growing thicker. Soon the alders will form a canopy over the stream protecting it from sun, wind, and erosion and provide more perches.

If you have a stream you can plant Western Redcedar, Red Alder, Black Hawthorn, native willows, and Cottonwood on its banks. Shrubs like Black Twinberry, Salmonberry, and Salal; sedges & rushes, flowering plants like Skunk Cabbage, Hedge-nettle, and Yellow Monkey-flower grow closer to the water.

It won't be long before your forest is growing! Even a young forest can attract insect-eating birds and bats and provides habitat for native pollinators like Mason Bees and bumble bees.

If you'd like to learn more about riparian forests join Uncover Your Creeks for monthly activities. Join us for the Tod Creek Watershed Tour and the Tod Creek Community Mapping Project. See the events page for more details!

Laura Gretzinger

Lead Steward Marigold Park

By Jenny Eastman
Saanich *Pulling Together* Volunteer Coordinator

Slipping smoothly through a nearby fence, Lead Steward Laura Gretzinger arrives at Marigold Park with binoculars dangling and a top notch spotting scope, all ready to set up. After a friendly and quick hello, her gaze swings immediately to the Douglas-fir canopy. When I first met Laura, I thought we'd be talking about invasive species, but there was such screeching coming from the stately trees above, our discussion turned immediately to Bald Eagles and the noisy, active nest Laura monitors, right in the midst of this shady neighbourhood park. The nest sits above the playground, so it's kids above and kids below, and fun and noise all about.

Laura is just the right neighbour for this park. She founded a *Pulling Together* Volunteer team to get to work removing invasive species, and she's monitored Bald Eagle nests in the CRD since 2012 with BC Nature's Wildlife Tree Stewardship program. Growing up in Ontario and Edmonton, Laura notes, "I've always found solace in nature. I feel trapped if I'm inside too long. I knew I wanted my career to focus on wildlife and nature. I just have to be connected to the natural world". With two degrees (biology and environmental studies), Laura has an active history with wildlife research projects, all while raising a family (sons, 10 and 15), supporting her husband's business, and volunteering with local schools, Saanich Volunteer Services, and Saanich Parks. Laura is proud of her 70+ Mom who joins in with Marigold Park work parties and Laura notes, "I think my west coast lifestyle is rubbing off on her!"

Monthly work parties find neighbours joining Laura, removing carpets of English Ivy and tangles of Himalayan Blackberry and Scotch Broom from the Garry Oak ecosystem of the park. Our thanks to Laura for her volunteer contribution, on the ground and up in the trees. She has this park fully covered.

Marigold Park work parties are held the third Saturday of each month, 10 am – 12 pm. For more information about the *Pulling Together* Volunteer Program in Saanich and the many parks where you'll find teams of volunteers engaged in ecological restoration, please visit: www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether

"I've always found solace in nature"

Marigold Park

By Laura Gretzinger
Lead Steward, Marigold Park

Marigold Park is undergoing a transformation. This small natural area forest is perched atop a hill and provides the perfect location for its resident Bald Eagle pair; they nest in a Grand Fir in the center of the park. This natural area is mostly composed of coastal Douglas-fir with an understory of Indian Plum, Snowberry, Nootka Rose, and Oregon Grape. Several of these Douglas-firs are 150 years or older. Other special features are a number of Garry Oak rock outcrops on the east side of the park. They host a carpet of Licorice Ferns and a few spring flowers such as Common Camas and Chocolate Lily.

In the beginning of 2014, I became the lead steward of the park in association with Saanich's *Pulling Together* Volunteer Program. I helped to develop a restoration plan for the area. The short term goals were to remove invasive species such as Himalayan Blackberry, Scotch Broom, Daphne, English Ivy, and English Holly that seemed to have spread from neighbouring properties. The first work party was advertised in May and members of the community came out to help restore Marigold Park. With a strong group of volunteers a Garry Oak rock outcrop in the northeast corner of the park was uncovered as all the blackberry and ivy were removed. It can be easily seen by all those who enter the park and is a great example of the restoration work that has been done so far. The program has reached out further in the community and has the support of scout groups and South Valley Park. There is still a lot of work to be done and more volunteers are always welcome. For more information visit www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether

Saanich Parks 2014 Boulevard Tree Planting Partnership

By Andrew Burger
Saanich Parks

During the 2014 winter and fall tree planting season, Saanich Parks installed 188 boulevard trees resulting from the Boulevard Tree Planting Partnership Program. This program has been a positive Urban Forestry Initiative engaging residents and community associations. The initiative benefits from and builds upon the partnership with BC Hydro and contributing funding from their Regreening Grant.

The Boulevard Tree Planting Partnership Program helps to promote the regreening of Saanich neighbourhoods, and follows the principal of planting the right tree in the right place. This includes planting appropriate tree species adjacent to utility services that do not impact existing above or below ground infrastructure. The program also helps to promote community stewardship in caring for Saanich's urban forest that becomes increasingly more important to sustain and expand the urban forest canopy. Residents who apply for a tree will have one planted (if space and conditions permit) on their boulevard for free in return for watering and weeding the tree during the first 3-5 years of establishment.

Please contact Saanich Parks by phone at 250-475-5522 or email at parks@saanich.ca to inquire about tree planting on your boulevard and to receive an application form for the fall 2015 planting season.

The Dark Side of Urban Forests

By Everett Peterson
Lead Steward, Goward Park Woodland

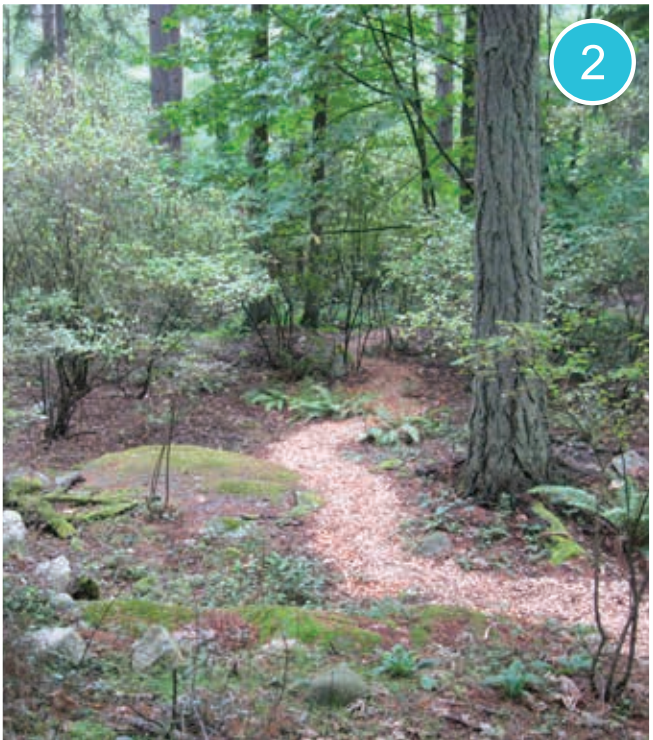
Portions of urban forests adjacent to roads are magnets for persons inclined to dump garbage on public lands instead of using municipal recycling and waste collection facilities. That is the dark side of urban forests. As site stewards of parks and natural areas in Saanich, we need to recognize the reality that there will always be some persons willing to use public lands as a waste depository. How can we adapt to that reality? How in our ecosystem restoration work can we devise deterrents to public dumping of waste into urban forests? Are there ways that garbage dumping locations at the edges of urban forests can be turned into areas of beauty that highlight the desirable aspects of these forests?

A quarter century of forest restoration in the Goward Park Woodland, a six-acre public space bounded by Arbutus Road and Haro Road near the University of Victoria, has revealed both the dark side and the worthier side of this precious urban forest. Removal of the camouflaging cover of non-native invasive species such as Daphne Laurel, Scotch Broom, English Ivy, and English Holly has exposed a notable accumulation of waste items. The concern is not just with discarded food wrappers and beverage containers; it is about larger durable objects such as car tires, sofa cushions, vandalized signs, and unwanted building materials. An example of this dark side of urban forests is the January 2015 collection of discarded items retrieved from areas cleared of Ivy and placed for pickup on the Haro Road side of Goward Park Woodland (see Figure 1).

In contrast, Figure 2 is an inspirational view of an urban forest; in this case the portion of Goward Park Woodland adjacent to Arbutus Road. This attractive setting, as recently as 2010, was covered by continuous Ivy on the forest floor and underlain by substantial waste accumulation from Arbutus Road access. Now it appears to be respected as a place of beauty instead of a dumping spot for garbage.

Edges of urban forests that are adjacent to street access, and especially if there is vehicle pull-over space, are locations most likely to be sites of waste dumping. One suggestion is to concentrate ecosystem restoration activities in the locations where garbage has been dumped repeatedly in the past. Figure 3 is an example from the Goward Park Woodland, where a new Douglas-fir marks the beginning of restoration at a favoured waste dumping location along Haro Road. It is not yet known if this will be an effective way to persuade persons to reduce or avoid waste disposal in Saanich's public open spaces. The view in Figure 2 gives us hope that this approach may help.

Figure 1. Discarded objects collected at roadside.
Figure 2. Urban forest free of invasive species and garbage.
Figure 3. New planting in former dumping area.



Let it Bee

By Claudia Copley
Royal BC Museum Entomology Collections Manager

When it comes to urban forests, adopting a *let it be* attitude will do wonders for bees! Many of us seem to have a tidy gene when it comes to our landscapes - maybe it's pressure to "keep up with the Joneses", maybe we just love hard square edges on our shrubbery - I can't explain it. But if you also love having your plants pollinated so they produce fruits and vegetables, then you must relax in a lawn chair more often than you spend mowing, trimming, and tidying.

Let me explain:

Most people by now have heard that bees are in trouble. And most people also understand that pesticides are an enormous part of the problem, and Saanich has a pesticide bylaw to help address this. Great! But what most people don't know is that there are approximately 450 different species of bee in BC! And only one of these is the domesticated European Honey Bee - source of delicious honey, of course, and living typically in artificial hives since its introduction to the west coast of North America in 1858. Where are the other 449 bee species living??? **Everywhere**, is the answer, but more specifically: in natural habitats, in naturalized habitats, and, with hardly any effort, in your yard.

How can you make room for bees?

There are hundreds of species of bees that live solitary lives, in contrast to the famous Honey Bee and the fuzzy and wondrous bumble bees, of which there are only 39 species in BC. Moving from flower to flower unnoticed and under-appreciated, solitary bees often look like wasps or flies, and some are so small you cannot tell they are a bee until you see them under a microscope. For nesting, some species use the exit holes of beetles emerging from dead trees, others burrow into the ground, and still others create special structures out of leaves to house their young. A solitary bee that many people have become familiar with is the Blue Orchard Bee, also called the Mason Bee (*Osmia lignaria*). Home-owners can provide artificial homes for this species and benefit from its incredible pollination efficiency. These homes are mimicking small holes in dead trees - a critical feature in urban forests that is often removed. Ground-nesting solitary bees can be encouraged by leaving areas of exposed and undisturbed soil or packed sand. It's also important to have fallen logs and branches as part of your landscape. Hollow plant stems are another popular nesting site for solitary bees, so don't be so quick to tidy things up or you will be eliminating important pollinator habitat.

Over recent years, study after study has shown that urban forests left in more natural states provide habitats for native pollinators to thrive. In short, what I am suggesting is for you to spend more time enjoying your garden then trying to tame it. You'll pollute less, feel more relaxed, and be doing your part in protecting pollinators. And you'll enjoy greater harvests of raspberries, apples, cucumbers, plums, squash, pears, blueberries, kiwi, melons, currants, strawberries, cherries, peaches, nectarines, tomatoes - do I need to keep going or are you convinced?

Want to learn more? The Xerces Society has a wealth of information available on their website about protecting pollinators, and even offer pollinator habitat workshops: www.xerces.org

Trends in Saanich's Urban Forest

By Adam Taylor
Executive Director Habitat Acquisition trust

Trees play an important role in our community. Many roles in fact. They provide habitat for wildlife, including birds, butterflies, other beneficial insects, squirrels, and many more besides. Trees absorb water during rain, cool our community during summer, and shelter our houses from wind in the winter. Trees play an important role for our mental health as well. Many studies have drawn connections between trees in a community and the sense of well-being and community engagement of the residents. So tracking what is happening to the urban forest in communities is important; it is too valuable an asset to be ignored or forgotten.

This is why Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) and Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative mapped the urban forest in the CRD using air photos, to track changes from 1986 to 2012. Here's what we found for the District of Saanich, which was useful in developing Saanich's Urban Forestry Strategy (www.saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/trees/urban).

Trees by the numbers:

- In 2005, Saanich had 5,055.2 hectares (approximately 12,132 acres) of tree cover. 47.3% of the municipality was underneath a tree canopy.
- In 2011, Saanich had 4,676.9 hectares (approximately 11,225 acres) of tree cover. 43.7% of the municipality is underneath a tree canopy.
- Between 2005 and 2011, Saanich lost 378.3 hectares (934 acres) of tree cover. For comparison, Mount Douglas Park is approximately 181.5 hectares.
- This means that in a 6 year period, Saanich lost 7.5% of its urban forest.

The trend here is fairly clear – the urban forest is declining, and declining at an incredibly rapid pace. To compound matters, at the same time that urban forest is declining, impervious surfaces are increasing. From an environmental stand point, impervious surfaces, like pavement and building tops, do the opposite of treed surfaces. They result in faster water runoff during storms, which compounds flooding and stormwater management issues. Far from cooling neighbourhoods, impervious surfaces create heat islands.

Impervious surfaces by the numbers:

- In 2011, 2,559.1 hectares (6,141 acres) of Saanich was covered over in impervious surface, an increase of 532.8 hectares (1,278 acres). This is an area equal to almost 3 Mount Douglas Parks.
- This was a 26.3% increase in the amount of impervious surface in just 6 years. That is a tremendous increase in a very short period of time.

Where do we go from here?

Most of our urban forest is on private land, and most of the other changes in our landscape, such as increases in impervious surfaces, are occurring on private lands as well. There is a role for regulations, such as bylaws and development permit application zones, but we also need private land owners to engage in caring for and replenishing our urban forest. To help support residents in Saanich (as well as other urban municipalities), HAT is launching an Urban Forest Good Neighbors project. Through the project, HATs Stewardship staff will meet with landowners to help them find solutions to tree care problems, and help them identify new sites for young trees that will grow into the next generation of the urban forest.

Urban Forests and Energy Conservation

By Glenys Verhulst
City Green Solutions

Did you know that the right tree in the right place can shrink your home energy use? Careful planning about tree type and placement is required to balance heating, cooling, lighting, and energy generation considerations throughout the year. These tips provide general advice, and an energy advisor can help you determine how energy is being used in your particular building and how best to improve your home's comfort and efficiency.

Winter Considerations:

Space heating is the biggest use of energy in a typical Saanich home, and trees can either help or hinder your winter energy saving goals. To shrink energy bills:

- Maximize passive solar heating and natural light through south facing windows by avoiding planting tall conifer (evergreen) trees to the south of your home. Choose low hedges or deciduous trees instead.
- Observe the wind conditions on your property, and plant a windbreak of dense trees (e.g. a cedar hedge) to protect your home from the strongest cold winds.

Summer Considerations:

Air conditioning is not typical for Saanich homes, and therefore is not generally a big energy user. However, whether or not you use an air conditioner, these tips can help keep your home cool in the summer:

- There are many factors affecting how hot your home gets in the summer (eg: insulation levels in your attic, appliances, etc.). Typically, most heat gain in the summer comes through south and west facing windows. Maximize cooling by providing shade in these areas. Choosing deciduous trees will allow you to provide shade in the summer while allowing some sun to enter the windows in the winter.
- Planting trees to shade your south-facing walls and your roof can also provide cooling benefits in the summer.

Other Considerations:

Solar energy is a very useful and free resource. When planting trees, avoid:

- Shading out garden spaces or potential garden spaces.
- Shading out sunny roof areas if you or your neighbours have or are planning to install solar panels.

More Tips:

Check out the BC Hydro's tips about planting not just trees but also vines, shrubs, and even berries and beans for energy efficiency in the summer! www.bchydro.com/powersmart/residential/guides_tips/green-your-home/cooling_guide/shade_trees.html

For other resources and information on how to save energy at home and at work see www.citygreen.ca

Native Plant Sale

SWAN LAKE
CHRISTMAS HILL
NATURE SANCTUARY

Sat-Sun, April 25-26 9 am to 3 pm
3873 Swan Lake Road

Over 4,000 plants and over a hundred species available for purchase at our Annual Native Plant Sale. Have a look at our list of plants here: swanlake.bc.ca/plant-sale
Pre-orders over $300 are available by calling 250-479-0211
Parking is limited. Please carpool if possible.

Join the *Our Backyard* mailing list!

Be kept up to date on local community stewardship projects and environmental issues. Subscriptions to this quarterly newsletter are free and available in electronic or paper version.
To subscribe, please send your contact information to the editor or visit ourbackyard.saanich.ca

Editor: Darren Copley | Phone: 250-475-5579 | Email: Darren.Copley@saanich.ca

Upcoming Events

Saanich Recreation Trails & Treks

www.saanich.ca - 250-475-5408

Weekend Walks (FREE Drop-In)

Sundays | 1 pm to 3:00 pm

Discover the beauty of the Saanich parks right in your backyard. These FREE guided hikes are open to adults of all ages. No registration necessary just drop in at the appropriate time and meeting place. Please wear sturdy and supportive footwear. Carry drinking water. Walks go rain or shine.

Mar 22 - Parks of Gordon Head
Meet outside entrance of Gordon Head Rec, off Feltham Rd
Apr 27 - Mystic Vale & Herons of Cadboro Bay
Meet by tennis courts at Henderson Rec Ctre, on Cedar Hill X Rd
May 17 - Swan Lake to Bow Park
Meet at parking lot behind Municipal Hall, end of Darwin St.

Gentle Walk & Talk (FREE Drop-In)

Thursdays | 9:30 am to 11 am

Enjoy beautiful scenery, a friendly chat, and gentle exercise as we walk through our parks & trails. Suitable for all walking abilities, but wear suitable footwear. Dogs not permitted.

Mar 19 - Cadboro Bay to Queen Alexandra
Meet at Cadboro Gyro Park end of Sinclair Rd., beside washrooms
Mar 26 - Viaduct Flats to Horticulture Centre of Pacific
Meet at Viaduct Flats parking lot, on Interurban, north of Camosun
Apr 2 - Sayward Hill
Meet at Lochside Park, north of Cordova Bay Rd
Apr 9 - Bow Park
Meet at Gordon Head Rec Centre lobby, 4100 Lambrick Way
Apr 16 - Arbutus Cove to Hollydene
Meet at Arbutus Cove Park, end of Arbutus Cove Lane
Apr 23 - McMinn – Kentwood - Outterbridge
Meet at McMinn Park – 4820 Maplegrove St at Lochside Dr.
Apr 30 - Colquitz to Hyacinth park
Meet at Colquitz Creek park sign near Silver City Theatre at Tillicum
May 7 - Mt.Tolmie & Finnerty Gardens
Meet at Henderson Rec Ctr, main entrance parking lot
May 14 - Rithet's Bog to Brydon Park
Meet at kiosk on Dalewood, off Chatteron Way
May 21 - Cedar Hill to Playfair Park
Meet at Cedar Hill Rec Centre, main doors
May 28 - Mt.Doug to Glendenning
Meet at washroom in main parking lot off Cordova Bay Rd at Ash Rd.

Evergreen BC: Uncover Your Creeks

www.uncoveryourcreeks.ca

Tod Creek Watershed Community Map

Saturday March 28 | 1 pm to 4 pm

Prospect Lake Community Hall, 5358 Sparton Rd

Bring your ideas and knowledge to this unique workshop where we will be working together to create a community map of the TodCreek watershed! RSVP: www.evergreenbc.eventbrite.ca

Habitat Acquisition Trust

Visit www.hat.bc.ca for more programs

Victoria Native Plant Garden Tour

Sunday May 3 | details to come

Regularly visit the HAT website for updates to this garden tour of all sizes, types, and ages.

CRD Parks & Environmental Services

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

Our naturalists lead guided walks, hikes, canoeing, and drop-in events for all ages. Most are free, all are fun! The Parks Nature Outings and Events brochure can be found on the website.

Buzz about Bees (Drop-in Event)

Friday, March 13 | 11am to 2pm

Francis/King Regional Park (Saanich)

Bee songs, bee crafts and some bee spit to taste. Join us and you'll bee amazed, bee enchanted and bee happy.

Stop, Look, Listen (Guided Walk)

Tuesday, March 17 | 1–2:30pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Saanich)

Find what's hidden on the "unnature trail", meet a tree, and more. Meet at the info kiosk in the Beaver Lake parking lot.

Amazing Race (Drop-in Event)

Thursday, March 19 | 11am to 2pm

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Saanich)

Challenge yourself on this 'skill-testing' and fun jaunt through the forest. Meet at the info kiosk in the Beaver Lake parking lot.

Spring Fling (Drop-in Event)

Friday, March 20 | 11am to 2pm

Francis/King Regional Park (Saanich)

Explore the sights, sounds and smells of spring with exhibits, crafts, and activities. Guided walks at 11:15am and 1pm.

Family Forest Tea Party (Guided Walk)

Sunday, March 29 | 1–3pm

Francis/King Regional Park (Saanich)

Bring the family along for a tea party in the woods with interpretive tea tasting from our local plants, plus a short guided walk. $10/family + GST. Register by March 27, 250-478-3344.

Efficient Irrigation Workshops (Course)

Wed, Mar 11 (7-9pm)	Controller Scheduling	Oak Bay
Sat, Mar 28 (2-5pm)	All Efficient	Saanich
Sat, April 25 (2-5pm)	Micro/Drip	Metchosin
Sat, May 09 (2-5pm)	All Efficient	Sooke
Wed, May 13 (7-9pm)	Controller Scheduling	Saanich
Sat, May 23 (2-5pm)	Maintenance	Sidney
Sat, June 13 (2-5pm)	Micro/Drip	Saanich
Wed, July 08 (7-9pm)	Controller Scheduling	Saanich
Sat, July 18 (2-5pm)	Micro/Drip	Saanich

A properly installed & maintained irrigation system will conserve water! Irrigation experts will explain system components and discuss scheduling & maintenance tips. Please pre-register for these free workshops: 250.474.9684 www.crd.bc.ca/workshops

Saanich

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary

www.swanlake.bc.ca - 250-479-0211

Guided Bird Walks (Drop-In)

Every Wednesday and Sunday | 9:00 am
Bring your binoculars and meet in the parking lot for this walk around the lake. Donations are appreciated.

Spring Break Programs (Drop-in Event)

Mon to Thu, March 16-19 | 12 pm to 3 pm
Hooray for Hummingbirds - Monday, March 16th
Super Snakes - Tuesday, March 17th
Marvelous Mammals - Wednesday, March 18th
Marsh Madness - Thursday, March 19th
Games, crafts, songs, and hands-on activities.

Fossil Fair (Drop-in Event)

Saturday & Sunday, March 28/29 | 10 am to 4 pm
Paleontologists will share their fossil discoveries and ID the fossils you bring in. Kids can make fossil rubbings, and dig for fossils in a sandbox and take a fossil home as a treasure.

Native Plant Sale

Saturday & Sunday, April 25\26 | 10 am to 4 pm
Over 4,000 plants and hundreds of species available during this anticipated annual event. Pre-orders available - call 250-479-0211. See our web site for Plant list and extra parking locations.

Bee Day (Drop-in Event)

Sunday, May 31 | 12 pm to 3 pm
What's the buzz about bees–are they really good dancers? Bee songs, crafts and some bee spit to taste. You'll bee amazed, bee enchanted and bee happy. Bee there or bee square.

Compost Education Centre

1216 North Park Street
www.compost.bc.ca - 250-386-WORM (9676)

Advanced Composting Workshop (FREE)

Saturday, March 14 | 10 am to 12 pm
Topics covered will include dynamic accumulators and hot composting, compost tea, in-situ composting methods and humanure. *Must have completed a Composting Basics Workshop. Register at www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Spring Planting Workshop

Saturday, March 14 | 2 pm to 4 pm
Learn how to start seeds, transplant and harden off your seedlings, crop rotation, soil building, and how to make organic fertilizers. Non-Member $20 Member $15 (or free with membership). Register at www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Composting Basics Workshop (FREE)

Saturday, April 11 | 10 am to 12 pm
Learn all the basics of composting and discover which system is right for you! Register at www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Grow Your Own Food 101 Workshop

Saturday, April 11 or May 2 | 2 pm to 4 pm
This is for total beginners who want to start growing fresh produce. Non-Member $20 Member $15 (or free with membership). Register at www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Soil Science 101 Workshop (FREE)

Saturday, May 30 | 10 am to 12 pm
We'll look at soil properties and processes and relationships to plant growth, environmental quality and society. Register at www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Converted Freezer Composters Workshop

Saturday, May 30 | 2 pm to 4 pm
Learn how to convert an old freezer into an efficient, rodent-proof composter! Non-Member $20 Member $15 (or free with membership). www.eventbrite.ca/org/3022484318

Victoria Natural History Society

Visit www.naturevictoria.ca for more programs

Natural History Night (every 2nd Tuesday)

Meet the Grigs | Tues, Mar 10, 7:30 pm
Status of Wildlife in West Africa | Tues, Apr 14, 7:30 pm
TBA | Tues, May 12, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Botany Night (every 3rd Tuesday)

Biodiversity of the Central Coast | Tues, Mar 17, 7:30 pm
Flora of Mount Kilimanjaro | Tues, Apr 21, 7:30 pm
TBA | (Tues, May 19, 7:30 pm)
Swan Lake Nature Centre

Birder's Night (every 4th Wednesday)

Marbled Murrelet Conservation | Wed, Mar 25, 7:30 pm
The Great Bufflehead Crash | Wed, Apr 22, 7:30 pm
TBA | Wed, May 27, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Marine Night (last Monday of the month)

Sea Star Wasting Syndrome | Mon, Mar 30, 7:30 pm
Ecosystem-Based Ocean Management | Apr 27, 7:30 pm
TBA | Mon, May 25, 7:30 pm
UVic Fraser Building, Room 159