



Our Backyard

A NEWSLETTER ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAANICH

Volume 12
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Why Reducing Urban Speed Limits Will Improve the Natural Environment

Many jurisdictions around the world have established lower urban speed limits and studied the results. The benefits go beyond the safety and livability of neighbourhoods. Reduced fuel consumption and green house gases are the most immediately measurable. Air quality is improved through a substantial reduction in particulate matter because there is less acceleration and braking when travelling at lower speeds. Noise levels drop. Evidence of other positive side effects takes more time to become apparent. Neighbourhood interaction increases, pedestrians and cyclists are encouraged because they feel safer. Increased pedestrian and cyclist activity reduces traffic volume. Reduced traffic volume further reduces air pollution. Greenspace is preserved because the space required for an automobile travelling at a lower speed is reduced. Increased physical activity results in better health and decreases the overall cost to society. The list goes on and these are only the environmental and social benefits.

And on the downside . . . well, there actually isn't one! Are you skeptical? Check out the following Studies:

1. Environmental Assessment of Low Speed Policies For Motor Vehicle Mobility in City Centres (J. Casanova, N. Fonseca) – Madrid http://www.gnest.org/journal/Vol_14_no_2/192-201_869_NRG_22_Casanova_14-2.pdf
2. 20 MPH Speed Limits – Why they are the future of urban transport www.transportpolicy.org.uk/Future/20mph/20mph.htm
3. The Impact of Lowered Speed Limits in Urban and Metropolitan areas – Monash University, Australia <http://www.monash.edu.au/miri/research/reports/muarc276.html>
4. Lower Urban Speed Limits – Better For Citizens, Better For The Environment, Better For All – The European Federation For Transport & The Environment www.transportenvironment.org/sites/default/files/media/11-01-T30.pdf

We need to evolve our thinking. Drivers need to have a reason to drive slowly. The notion that a 40 km/h urban speed limit will result in increased travel time, congestion, gridlock and increased air pollution is misguided - the benefits comprehensively outweigh any minor inconvenience.

By Dave Ferguson
Saanich Resident at Large



NEW Home Heating Oil Tanks Brochure

By Adriane Pollard, Saanich Environmental Services

The protection of our waterways and natural habitat is important to all of our residents. The municipality has developed a new *Home Heating Oil Tanks* brochure for residents who use heating oil systems to heat their homes. Following a number of home heating oil spills in Saanich, the municipality has focused on a proactive, community-based approach to reduce spills to the natural environment.

The brochure includes tank inspection and preventative maintenance tips, spill response instructions, and emergency contact numbers that all tank owners should have readily accessible. Identifying tank leaks early is the key to preventing spills to the environment and helping homeowners avoid expensive clean-up costs.

The municipality hopes the information in the brochure will help prevent spills like the one that occurred in November 2011 on Swan Creek, which resulted in 1,800 litres of heating oil being released to the waterway from a private residence. The spill caused significant contamination of fish habitat and an expensive remediation and monitoring program. In some cases, the homeowner has had to bear the substantial remediation costs.

The brochure is a result of a joint effort between the Municipality's Planning, Engineering and Fire Departments.

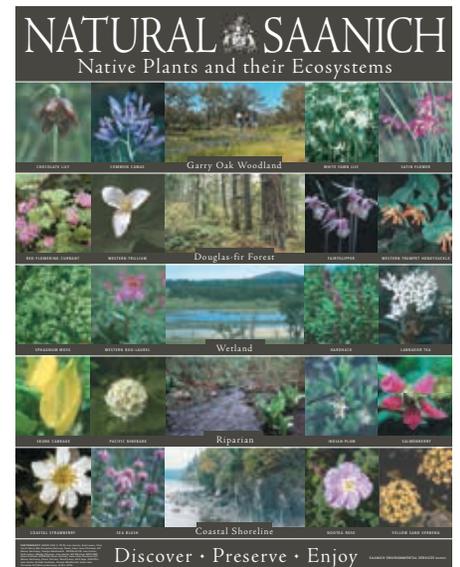


www.saanich.ca/oiltanks

POSTERS & BROCHURES AVAILABLE AT SAANICH

Great resources about the natural environment are available through the District of Saanich. Below are just two examples. Visit our website to find other great resources www.environment.saanich.ca

Natural Saanich: Native Plants and their Ecosystems poster: This poster (21 x 29 inch) features images of twenty attractive native plants found in five local ecosystem types. It shows how attractive our local native plants are and is meant to entice residents to Naturescape their properties. Sometimes all people have left on their property are mature native trees and they would like to restore the flowers and shrubs that would have naturally been found growing with those trees. The poster is free of charge to schools, libraries, recreation centres, and other key organizations within Saanich, or anyone who can find a good use for it. The five ecosystems featured in the poster are: Garry Oak woodland, Douglas-fir forest, wetland, riparian, and coastal shoreline. Please contact the editor if you'd like to pick one up.



Invasive Plant Alert

Lesser Celandine
Ranunculus ficaria

One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in Saanich is the spread of invasive non-native plants. The District of Saanich appreciates the cooperation of all residents in removing Lesser Celandine from private property.

For assistance please contact:
On Private Land:
 Saanich Environmental Services:
 250-475-5471 or planning@saanich.ca
On Public Land:
 Saanich Parks:
 250-479-5322 or parke@saanich.ca

Why is Lesser Celandine a problem?

- Dense groundcover infestations eliminate native plants and impact wildlife habitat.
- This species establishes and spreads quickly through very early seasonal growth and dense networks of roots, tubers and bulbils.
- Toxic to most mammals, causing sickness in livestock and rare deaths.

What does it look like?

- Low growing, herbaceous perennial from the buttercup family.
- Yellow flowers 2-3 cm wide with 8-12 petals. Thick, shiny, dark-green leaves, kidney or heart-shaped, stalked and densely packed.

Could be confused with:

- Marsh Marigold (*Galium palustris* var. *radicans*, native to BC and CA; palustris var. *palustris*, introduced from Eastern North America, found in wetter environments).

Distribution:

- Native to Northern Africa, temperate Asia and most of Europe
- Reported invasions are in limited areas of southwestern BC

www.invasives.saanich.ca

Lesser Celandine Invasive Plant Alert Sheet:

One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in Saanich is the spread of invasive non-native plants. The District of Saanich appreciates the cooperation of all residents in removing Lesser Celandine from private property, and reporting any sightings in the district. This alert sheet is one in a series that help identify some of our priority invaders in the region. Check out the fact sheet to find out why you should be on the lookout for Lesser Celandine as it begins to flower in February. All of the invasive species alert sheets can be found at www.saanich.ca/invasives.

Fox Sparrow Geolocator Project

By Ann Nightingale
Rocky Point Bird Observatory



Rocky Point Bird Observatory (RPBO) may be one of the most active local conservation groups that nobody's heard of, but that is about to change! Since 1994, RPBO has been monitoring bird migration in the fall at Rocky Point in Metchosin, but recently they have added projects that are tracking birds all over the region, including in several areas of Saanich.

We often take for granted that "somebody" must know everything there is to know about birds, but that is far from the truth. We don't even know many of the basics—like where the birds that are here in the winter go in the summer. This winter, RPBO has undertaken a project to recruit 30 wintering Fox Sparrows to carry geolocators (small light sensitive devices) with them to their breeding grounds in the spring. Many of these have been banded in Saanich. We don't even know if these backyard birds are heading "home" to Port Renfrew or going all the way to Alaska! Next fall, they will return with the story of their travels, and we'll need to recapture them to remove the geolocators. You can help by watching for banded birds at your feeders. These couriers will have an aluminum band on one leg and a coloured band on the other.

If you see a banded bird of any kind, contact rpbo@rpbo.org and we'll help you find out the story behind it.

RPBO is always interested in adding new volunteers to our projects. If you have an interest in birds and citizen science, please visit our website at www.rpbo.org and watch for information about our upcoming monitoring season!

Butterflies of Victoria Photo Request

By James Miskelly, Victoria Natural History Society

This winter, the society will be working on an identification brochure for Victoria-area butterflies. You may have seen the place-mat style *Guide to the Garden Butterflies of the Georgia Basin* produced by the Vancouver Natural History Society. The District of Saanich has also produced a very nice brochure on native flowers that we can use for inspiration.

We hope that this will be the first in a series of brochures that will treat a variety of different animal or plant groups in our area. Before we can get started, however, we need photos. There are recent records of 38 species in the Victoria area. At this point, we are seeking photos of as many as possible, though the total number included in the brochure may ultimately need to be reduced. Photos of adults, caterpillars, and chrysalises are welcome. If you have a photo that you are particularly fond of, or just willing to share, please contact james.miskelly@gmail.com or call 250-544-0455.



NEWS FROM HALIBURTON FARM

By Peter Liddell, Board member
www.haliburtonfarm.org

Happy Birthday to Victoria's first Community Farm!

In December, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary with a thank you party for loyal volunteers, founding members, Cordova Bay Association supporters, and our farsighted landowner – the District of Saanich. Tina Fraser-Baynes, one of the founding members and Councillor Dean Murdock from the District of Saanich, did the honours, cutting the cake.

Full Greenhouse at the Farm

With the arrival of Shooting Starts Greenhouse, Haliburton Community Organic Farm now has a full complement of tenants - five farms, the wetlands reclamation project, and now the new business, which will supply native plant starts and other certified organic seedlings, for sale at the farmstand and at local markets.

Community Activities in 2013

For the 2013 season, plans are again afoot, with tours and events throughout the season. All the event details are to be found on our website, as they are arranged. Join us on one of our workparty days starting up again at the end of February, to get hands-on experience and hear what's upcoming at your community farm.

The Haliburton Seedy Saturday is a significant annual event, making locally grown, certified organic seeds available in 'your backyard'. The first ever Seedy Saturday at the farm was on January 12th, 2013. Seed growers and vendors displayed an impressive range of certified organic seeds and produce, and the community joined in at a community seed swap table.

The next Growing Food in the City class, starting March 2013 and ending in Sept. 2013 at the farm in collaboration with Gaia College and Royal Roads University (www.gaiacollege.ca) has a few spaces open (limit is 20 per class). The course includes hands-on components such as seeding, and building compost, offered at participants' own growing spaces.

Local schools and secondary learning institutions continue their involvement at the farm. All schools are warmly welcomed.

Farm tours are arranged through contacting the farm email and are guided by a farmer and/or Board member. Email: info@haliburtonfarm.org

Two new Hali Food Box programs:

The farm currently sells weekly food boxes full of fresh local organic produce in the summer and winter to a limited number of customers. In order to supply the increasing food box program demand, two new 'shoulder season' boxes will be available in 2013, as our new farmers realize just how much produce they can grow, even on the limited farm land at Haliburton Farm.

Biodiversity Project:

Thanks to the Claremont Secondary classes and the hard-working biodiversity volunteers, who have been coming out regularly once a week to volunteer at the farm's wetland restoration project.

Celebrating 10 years!



Pulling Together

an assortment of the latest news from our program

By Jenny Eastman, Coordinator of Volunteers
jenny.eastman@saanich.ca



**Pulling Together
Volunteer
Program**

Braefoot Park *Pulling Together* Volunteer Program gets going as neighbours of the park are now removing English Ivy from the Garry Oak ecosystem in the park. Our first community work party will be in February. As we uncover this Garry Oak ecosystem, we hope to have help from more neighbours and from some young adults with special needs who are part of a local project.

Ferndale Forest Park's first work party was held on January 21 and hosted by volunteers and Saanich Parks staff. Neighbours have been strategizing, staff have been completing hazard tree assessments, and we are excited to further our restoration work in this quiet and shady park. Everyone welcome!

Lifetime Networks is a local organization that seeks to create an inclusive community and works with special needs youth to help them gain experience and create community. This winter and spring, *Pulling Together* volunteers will host special needs youth at several ecological restoration sites. We look forward to a rewarding partnership.

Kids in Parks: Three local schools have asked how they can contribute to restoration efforts in Saanich Parks and teach their students about local ecosystems. We will host up to 100 students doing hands-on work this spring.

UVic Partnership Projects: Last year, more than twenty students from UVic helped prepare action oriented restoration plans for Saanich Parks. This spring, expect to see more teams of students from the Restoration of Natural Systems program out in several parks helping us prepare more restoration plans to guide our work.

If you or a group would like to volunteer in one of your Saanich Parks, please be in touch. We provide all tools and refreshments. We'd love to pull together with your team. All our events, contact information and program details can be found at www.saanich.ca/living/natural/opportunities.html

Mt Douglas Park - Invasive Species Group

By Judy Spearing (Saanich Parks *Pulling Together* Program)

The main task for Mt Douglas Park volunteers in 2012 and into winter 2013 has been the removal of invasive species from a swath of parkland on the western perimeter of the park above the Blenkinsop Valley. Volunteers are working from both ends of this heavily infested area and should be finished this initial sweep by spring 2013, weather permitting.

With all restoration work along park perimeters, there's a concern that new invasive plants will move in from source populations on adjacent private properties. Immediately after the invasive species have been removed, much of the understorey is thinned and the soil is left disturbed and bare, making it more vulnerable to reinfestation. To offset the potential for this occurring we try to replant native species to infill cleared areas before new invasives move in. Volunteers hope, through our efforts, that neighbours will see the changes within the Park and consider the removal of non-native, invasive species from their land.

Once we finish this current project we plan to revisit areas previously restored between 2006-2011. We know English Ivy and English Holly are slowly coming back in those sites, from bits of root left behind and new seedlings sprouting from berries dropped in the soil over the years. Because of the tenacity of non-native, invasive species, secondary sweeps are an absolute must in any restoration project. Fortunately, this follow up work isn't nearly as tough as the initial clearing so if anyone is interested in helping us in 2013, please call Saanich Parks at 250-475-5522.

We always need more volunteers!



Tree Appreciation Day Nov 4, 2012

By Cory Manton, Saanich Parks

Three separate events were held this year with over 150 volunteers participating to plant native trees and shrubs at the following locations:

1. **Capital City Allotment Garden lands along the banks of Swan Creek:** Cuttings of Pacific Willow and Red-osier Dogwood were planted in an area recently cleared of invasive Golden Willow. These live stakes will grow and hopefully suppress the growth of invasive Reed Canary Grass. Representatives from the Capital City Allotment Gardens, Girl Guides and Scouts worked along side Saanich staff and other community members in efforts to provide riparian plants to shade the creek.
2. **Whitehead Park (Goward Road/Prospect Lake Road):** Hundreds of native trees and shrubs were planted along Tod Creek in areas where Golden Willow and Yellow Flag Iris were removed in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Representatives from the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed, *Pulling Together* volunteers and other community members joined together for hours of enjoyment sharing stories and learning about the environment while planting the trees and shrubs. Special thanks to Mary Haig-Brown and Winona Pugh along with all members of the Whitehead Park *Pulling Together* group for all their continued efforts to restore the area around Whitehead Park.
3. **Mt. Douglas Park:** Hundreds of native trees and shrubs were planted along Glendenning Trail in areas where invasive species have been removed by the Mount Doug *Pulling Together* group. Special thanks to Judy Spearing (Lead Steward), Dick Battles, John Jungen and David Poge along with all members of the Mount Douglas Park *Pulling Together* volunteer group for all their continued efforts to remove invasive species and restore the park. The Shelbourne Road Home Depot store staff turned out to help with the planting efforts and left behind more than \$1000.00 in tools and other equipment for the volunteers to use in their future efforts to control invasive species.

Special thanks to Thrifty Foods for donating the food and beverages for these events.



Septic Systems

Home Renovations and Redevelopment

By Gail Pike, Environmental Sustainability, Capital Regional District

Are you on a septic system and would like to renovate your home or redevelop your lot?

Confused about how to go about it?

Who do you contact?

What are the regulations?

What can you do yourself and when do you hire a professional?

What is the current role of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)?

Where do you start?

If you are renovating you will need to have your current septic system assessed to determine if it can accommodate the proposed renovations and to ensure you don't build that new bedroom or workshop above the septic tank or on top of your drainfield area. If you are building a new home you will need to have a new system properly planned and installed.

Who do you contact?

Your first move is to contact an Authorized Person. In B.C. an Authorized Person (AP) is either a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) or a Professional Engineer specifically trained in septic systems. Since 2005 septic systems in B.C. have been regulated by the provincial government Sewerage System Regulation (SSR). Under the SSR, only an Authorized Person is legally allowed to do any work on septic systems other than pumping out the tank and cleaning the effluent filter. No others may plan, install, or maintain systems in British Columbia, except that an owner may install a septic system under the direct supervision of the AP that filed the plans originally.

How do I find an Authorized Person?

To find a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) go to <http://owrp.asttbc.org/c/finder.php> or call 877-456-7697.

To find a Professional Engineer trained in septic systems go to www.apeg.bc.ca/members/sewerageprolist.html or call 888-430-8035.

What is the current role of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)?

The role of VIHA regarding septic systems is reduced. They no longer inspect septic system renovations or new installations. Here's what VIHA does now:

- Accept filing of sewerage system form from Authorized Persons.
- Keep as-builts or plans locating septic systems going back to the 1970's. If you need to know where your septic system components are, VIHA may have the plans. Call 250-519-3401. Note: Some municipalities have plans as well.
- Municipalities will send renovation referrals to VIHA who will either assess the suitability of the existing septic system for the proposed renovations or refer you to an Authorized Person.
- Investigate complaints about potential public health risks from malfunctioning septic systems.

Are septic systems included in municipal building permits?

Septic systems are part of the internal process of building permit applications for new construction. The municipalities and VIHA exchange relevant information and documents.

To learn more, or to attend a free CRD Septic Savvy workshop, contact CRD Hotline at hotline@crd.bc.ca
Phone: 250-360-3030 or see www.crd.bc.ca/septic

See the Events Listing on Page 9 for upcoming Septic Savvy Workshops.

Gardens Aflame

Garry Oak Book Maps the Region and its Beauty

By Maleea Acker

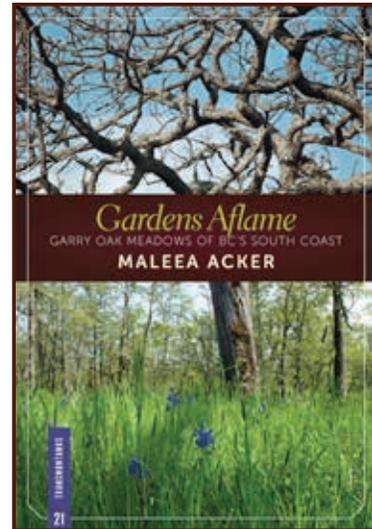
Accustomed to the dark, dripping stands of Douglas-fir, spruce and hemlock that blanketed the Hudson's Bay Company outposts on the remote western coast of the "New World", the first Europeans were surely startled to see the open landscapes of Garry Oak meadows they encountered on Southern Vancouver Island — landscapes that reminded explorers of Europe's cultivated parks.

Though slow in comprehending what they had stumbled upon, Europeans immediately recognized the deep, rich deposits of black soil that extended many feet below the surface, and James Douglas chose the site as the ideal location for HBC's new fort: the settlement that became Victoria.

What newcomers failed to appreciate is that these meadows were not the work of nature alone, but of the Coast Salish peoples who had been living in these parts for millennia. With the construction of Fort Victoria began an encroachment on these Garry Oak meadows, built up over millennia, a process that continues today.

Saanich writer Maleea Acker has explored this topic in her new book, *Gardens Aflame*, telling about this unique and vanishing ecosystem, and the people across the south island who have made it their life's work to save the Garry Oak and the ecosystem upon which it depends.

In this book, you can read about the Garry Oak ecosystems that used to cover so much of the Capital Regional District. Learn about the scientists, arborists, and Garry Oak-loving volunteers who have dedicated themselves to this tree, and about the writers and scientists who are still reshaping our notions of nature and humans' place in it. It's easy to fall under the spell of the strange beauty woven by these magnificent trees; this book offers a guide to the beauty of our south island oak ecosystems through a cultural exploration of their importance, bringing into focus all the issues raised 150 years ago when Europeans first saw the region's open meadows.

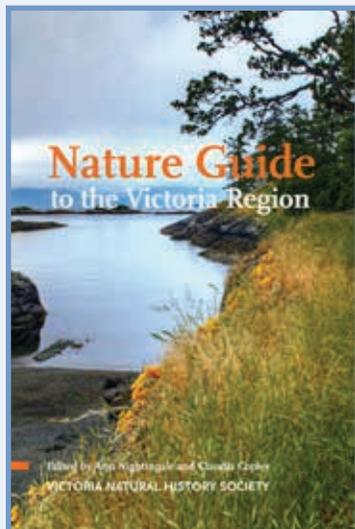


NATURE GUIDE TO THE VICTORIA REGION

By Claudia Copley
www.naturevictoria.ca

The Victoria region is a natural wonderland – one of the most biologically rich areas of the country, with many plants and animals found nowhere else in Canada. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned naturalist, a visitor or a resident, this book will give you the knowledge you need to get the most out of your explorations of southeastern Vancouver Island.

Ten local experts have contributed their knowledge about all things natural in this region, from mushrooms and dragonflies to owls and whales. In ten chapters, they describe the species most likely to be seen here, and direct you to the best places to see them.



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Birds – David Stirling and Alan MacLeod | Land mammals – David Nagorsen |
| Butterflies – James Miskelly | Marine mammals – Anna Hall |
| Dragonflies – Robert Cannings | Nearshore Fishes – Gavin Hanke |
| Fungi – Bryce Kendrick | Plants – Leon Pavlick |
| Intertidal life – Philip Lambert | Reptiles and amphibians – Gavin Hanke |

Nature Guide to the Victoria Region is designed to help you understand the variety of habitats and natural wonders awaiting your discovery, all in a portable, easy-to-read format. It includes beautiful full-colour photographs, checklists and a map of all the great places to visit.

Ann Nightingale is president of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory and Claudia Copley is the entomology collections manager at the Royal BC Museum. They and the other contributors to this book actively support the Victoria Natural History Society. This 4th and updated edition was previously published by the Victoria Natural History Society, and now is copublished with the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Upcoming Events

Saanich Recreation Free Programs

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

Sunday Hikes (FREE Drop-In)

Sundays, 1 pm - 3:30 pm

These FREE guided hikes are open to adults of all ages. Please wear sturdy and supportive footwear and carry adequate drinking water. Sorry, dogs are not permitted.

Feb 17 - Gordon Head Coastal Greenway

Meet at Vantreight Park, on Vantreight Rd, off Ferndale Ave

Mar 24 - Copley Park West/Layritz Park

Meet at Copley Park West, on Parkridge, off Vanalman Ave.

Gentle Walk & Talk (FREE Drop-In)

Thursdays, 9:30 am – 11 am

Enjoy beautiful scenery, a friendly chat, and gentle exercise as we take different walks through Saanich parks & trails. Suitable for all walking abilities, but wear suitable footwear.

Mar 7 - Hyacinth Park to Copley

Meet at Hyacinth Park parking lot, off Interurban

Mar 14 - Beckwith-Maltwood-Stoneywood

Meet at Beckwith Park parking lot, on Beckwith St, off Quadra

Mar 21 - Cedar Hill Golf Course to Kingsberry Pond

Meet at Cedar Hill Rec Centre parking lot at footbridge

Mar 28 - Layritz Park to Viaduct

Meet at Layritz Park parking lot, off Glyn, off Wilkinson

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary

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

Guided Birdwalks (Drop-In)

Every Thursday and/or Saturday, 9:00 am

Bring binoculars and meet in the parking lot.

Volunteer Restoration Team (Drop-In)

Every Wednesday and Sunday, 10 am - 1 pm

Volunteer to help remove invasive plants from Christmas Hill. Meet at the Nicholson Street entrance. For more info on what you need to bring, please contact Charlotte Houston, at restoration@swanlake.bc.ca.

Native Plant Gardening Workshop (Course)

Saturday, Feb 23, 1 pm - 4 pm

Tuesday, Feb 26, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Sunday, March 10, 1 pm - 4 pm

Sunday, March 17, 1 pm - 4 pm

Participate in a FREE workshop on gardening with drought-resistant native plants. Instructor Patricia Johnston will provide instruction on native plant identification, their benefits, and how to use them.

Who Gives a Hoot (Drop-in Event)

Sunday Feb 24, 12 pm - 3 pm

Who glides silently, and can cough-up a wicked hairball – who-who? Explore the world of owls through games, stories, and crafts.

Spring Break at Swan Lake (Drop-in Event)

March 18-21, 12 pm - 3 pm

Games, crafts, songs, and hands-on activities – fun for the whole family. Admission by donation.

Fossil Fair (Drop-in Event)

Saturday & Sunday, March 23-24, 10 am - 4 pm

Paleontologists will share their personal fossil discoveries. Bring your own fossils for identification.

Hummingbird Day (Drop-in Event)

Sunday, March 31, 12 pm - 3 pm

Anna's Hummingbirds start to nest in February, and it won't be too long before the Rufous return for the summer. Participate in crafts, stories, and song – don't worry if you don't know the words you can just – hum!

Sierra Club BC Youth Outings!

www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education

Join a group of fun youth while getting outdoors and reconnecting with nature. Sierra Youth Outings allow secondary students to participate in conservation based field work, restoration activities, and simple outdoor adventures in the Greater Victoria Area. For more info please contact us at 250.386.5255 ext 225 or shs@sierraclub.bc.ca

CRD Regional Parks

Visit www.crd.bc.ca for more programs 250-478-3344

The CRD Regional Parks Winter Nature Outings and Events brochure for January to March 2013 is now out. Our naturalists lead guided walks, hikes, and drop-in events for all ages and abilities. Most are free, all are fun!

Victoria Natural History Society

Visit www.naturevictoria.ca for more programs

Natural History Night (Feb 12, Mar 12, Apr 9)

7:30 pm UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Botany Night (Feb 19, Mar 19, Apr 16)

7:30 pm Swan Lake Nature Centre

Marine Night (Feb 25, Mar 25, Apr 29)

7:30 pm UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Birder's Night (Feb 27, Mar 27, Apr 24)

7:30 pm UVic Fraser Building, Room 159

Native Plant Study Group

www.npsg.ca

The Native Plant Study Group invites you to join other native plant enthusiast for tea, interesting presentations, and riveting conversations about Native Plants! Bring your questions and \$3 for the drop-in fee (non-members). Meetings are at the University of Victoria on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

CRD Septic Savvy Workshop

hotline@crd.bc.ca Phone: 250.360.3030

Saturday, Mar. 2 or Oct. 5, 9:30am - 12pm

Hartland Learning Centre 1 Hartland Avenue

Sunday, Mar. 3 or Oct. 5, 2 - 4:30pm

Juan de Fuca Library Meeting Room, 1759 Island Highway

The CRD offers free workshops to residents on how to properly care for a residential septic system. Proper maintenance has a significant impact on how well your system works and how long it lasts. Attend a workshop and learn how to protect the environment, your community's health and save money! Please preregister.

European Fire Ants

By Carolyn Richman, Environmental Education Officer, District of Saanich

European Fire Ants have now been found in several locations in BC in the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island. An action plan is in place involving key partners, including provincial and local governments, Thomson Rivers University, the Royal BC Museum, the Invasive Species Council of BC and regional species committees. The District of Saanich is a partner in this action plan, though the European Fire Ant is not yet confirmed within our jurisdiction.

This non-native, invasive species is an aggressive ant that swarms and has a painful sting. Although it is uncommon, stings have resulted in allergic reactions requiring medical attention. European Fire Ants form dense colonies in lawns and gardens, compromising the use of those areas by humans and other animals.

If you live in Saanich and suspect an invasion of European Fire Ants, please see tips below and contact:

Saanich Environmental Services (private lands) 250-475-5471 or planning@saanich.ca

Saanich Parks (municipal lands) 250-475-5522 or parks@saanich.ca

Tips to distinguish from other red ant species (such as beneficial native species):

- European Fire Ants nest in lawns, garden beds, under objects such as a rock or within wood debris. They do not form mounds, but there may be a small amount of soil disturbance at the nest site.
- Fire ants swarm rapidly and sting (versus the defensive behaviour of one or a few ants of other red ant species).
- Small (4-5mm), reddish colour; may have darker head.

If you have a confirmed European Fire Ant invasion on your property in Saanich, Saanich Environmental Services will assist you with treatment, information and ongoing monitoring.

If Stung: A European Fire Ant sting is usually described as burning for 30 minutes to 2 hours, then itching for 2-7 days. If you experience a stronger reaction (swelling, redness, discomfort and itching) call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 for 24 hour assistance. An extreme allergic (anaphylactic) reaction can be life-threatening and require emergency care.

Sponsored by Environmental Services of the District of Saanich

Seedy Saturday

VICTORIA'S ANNUAL SEED & GARDEN SHOW

- Non-GMO seeds
- Seedlings, plants
- Seed exchange
- Displays, demos
- Garden, food products
- Kids' activities
- Seedy Café
- Master Gardeners

SATURDAY, FEB 16, 2013
10AM-4PM • Victoria Conference Centre

Working towards an invasive plant free event

Admission **\$7** Under 12 free • Hosted by James Bay Market Society





Make the switch
to digital, and help
save trees! Join the
Our Backyard email
list!

WHY?

- View the entire document in colour
- Receive it earlier
- Reduce our use of paper
- Save energy

If you currently are receiving a paper copy, and you would prefer an electronic (pdf) copy of Our Backyard, please visit ourbackyard.saanich.ca. Or email me at: Darren.Copley@saanich.ca

Red-flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) is a very popular native shrub that is readily available in the horticultural trade. Flowering from March to May, the timing of the blooms coincides perfectly with the return of Rufous Hummingbirds. They are frequently seen feeding on the nectar. The bark is useful to birds for nesting material, and later on the berries are popular with robins, tanagers, and waxwings.

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