

Cutting through History

During the life of this Douglas-fir tree, it contributed nutrients to its surrounding ecosystem for nearly 250 years. Now, in its afterlife, it continues to do so but in a much different way.



Giving Life After Death

The tree has been cut approximately 13m off the ground which significantly reduces the hazard it formerly posed to us and other healthy trees nearby should it topple. While it may not be a tree in the traditional sense any longer, it does provide valuable habitat for birds, animals and insects that rely on this type of environment for survival. Wildlife trees are important to the biodiversity of their ecosystem.



The felled portion of the tree which lies here will assume many roles over the next several decades. Not only can it provide habitat, as the wood decays, it will provide nutrients to the soil and possibly 'nurse' more Douglas-fir and other tree seedlings to life.

Looks Can Be Deceiving

Much the same way that you cannot judge a book by its cover, you cannot determine the age of a tree simply by measuring its diameter. There are many factors that will determine how a tree grows. This particular tree was approximately 250 years old but its DBH (diameter breast height) was just 110cm. In contrast, another Douglas-fir that was felled due to advanced decay in its lower trunk had a very similar DBH of 119cm, yet was only 100 years old. Growing conditions such as soil volume, soil type, soil compaction, proximity to other trees, fire, sun/shade and water are just some of the factors influencing the growth rate of a tree.

The Coastal Douglas-fir Zone

The Coastal Douglas-fir Zone covers a small area of British Columbia's south coast, including a band of lower elevation along southeastern Vancouver Island. Here the majestic Douglas-fir reigns supreme, occurring in a wide range of sites from dry rock outcrops to moist valley bottoms. Douglas-fir was the most highly prized timber tree. In the early logging days it might take two men, using axes and crosscut saws, three or four hours to fell one of these giants. Today, very little old forest remains; most of it has been converted to farms, residences, or second-growth forests.*

* British Columbia Ministry of Forests,
The Ecology of the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone



2011

Tree was felled as a danger tree. This 'tree cookie' was cut from about a 13m height. There are 229 annual rings.

1973

Motorola was the first company to produce a handheld mobile phone

1977

Home computers entered the market

1843

Britain's claim to Vancouver Island is assured by Fort Victoria

1812

Canadians are victorious over Americans at the Battle of Queenston Heights

1867

Britain's North American Colonies are united to become the Dominion of Canada

1871

British Columbia becomes the 6th Province of Canada

1792

George Vancouver begins exploration of the Pacific Coast

For thousands of years this area has been the traditional territory of the Coast Salish People and provided important fishing and hunting grounds.

1906

Incorporation of the District of Saanich

1914

Start of World War I

1917

Battle of Vimy Ridge

1925

Victoria Cougars defeat Montreal Canadiens to win the Stanley Cup

1939

Start of World War II

1942

Emily Carr painted her last pictures in the park

1984

Grant Main and Dean Crawford are the first Victoria-born athletes to win Olympic Gold (Men's Rowing Eight)

1989

100th Anniversary of Mt Douglas Park and formation of the Friends of Mt Douglas Park Society

1994

Victoria hosts the XV Commonwealth Games

