

NPSG

JANUARY 2007

ANCIENT DOUGLAS-FIR
NEAR MATHESON LAKE

28.5 FT CIRCUMFERENCE
216.5 FT HEIGHT



PHOTO BY T J WATT

NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

RARE FORESTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Andy MacKinnon, global authority on Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) forests, author of *Plants of Coastal BC* among other plant field guides and instigator of the Witty's Lagoon New Year's Swim, gave an informative and eye-opening presentation on our BC rare forests. Naturally scarce because of biogeoclimatic features, Coastal Douglas-fir forests and their Garry oak ecosystems have seen a severe decline in their numbers since the first Europeans settled in BC. Also known as the coastal temperate rain-shadow forest, these ecosystems occur within summer dry, winter wet areas such as Southern Vancouver Island and south through the San Juans, Puget Sound and Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Victoria has an average rainfall of only 750 mm/yr while true coastal rain forest communities such as Tofino can see up to 3 m of rain annually.

Every plant community within the CDF is considered either blue- or red-listed. It has the most blue- and red-listed species in the province with 26 blue- or red-listed birds; 12 mammals; 16 gastropods; 9 insect and 132 flowering plant species at risk.

To illustrate the disparity within BC of protected areas, Andy informed us that the Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) zone (BC's coastal temperate rain-

forest) contains 55% old-growth forest and has 13% of its area protected while the subalpine Mountain Hemlock (MH) zone has 56% old-growth forest land base and has 14% of its total area protected. Our CDF contains only 3% old-growth forests, 46% is for urban uses and agriculture and 44% is second-growth (logged) forests. Only 3-5% of the total zone has been protected, whereas the average protected area of each zone within the province is 14%.

A limiting factor in preserving these magnificent old growth Douglas-fir and Garry oak forests is that most of the CDF zone is not in the public domain, only 7% is in provincial Crown Lands. Should all of the 7% be protected and allowed to age into old growth once again? Most of southeastern Vancouver Island was once owned by the E&N Railway and is now privately owned by forest (aka logging) companies. The Department of National Defence (DND) owns the most significant remnants of old growth CDF forest in the world, stands at Rocky Point, Mary Hill and Royal Roads are without peer.

The remnants in Washington State have a different plant composition, giving us a global responsibility to protect and recover what we have left here in BC. It is hoped that the federal government and

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Land Trusts (HAT, NCC, TLC) will take the lead in this endeavour.

Andy also mentioned the very driest zone of the CWH was once considered part of the CDF but has been reclassified due to the presence of some hemlock. This ecosystem too is considered equally endangered and needs our protection.

The Native Plant Study Group meets the 3rd Thursday Sept-May (except December) at 7:00 pm in Room D116, MacLaurin Bldg., UVic. Membership fees are \$15.00 annually or a \$2.00 drop-in charge.

SPEAKER SCHEDULE

February 15

Adolf Ceska "Taxonomy is Fun!"

Dr Ceska is one of BC's foremost authorities in all things botanical and a tireless leader of countless native plant and mycological outings. Adolf will share stories of ferns and fern allies of British Columbia that show how botanists tackle their taxonomic problems. (This is a rather high-brow topic, but Adolf assures me that it will be fun!)



Anderson's Holly Fern

March 15

Andrea Schiller "For Better or Worse?"

Andrea Schiller is a Federal Lands Natural Resources Specialist involved in adaptive management techniques for rare species management. Learn about the ongoing attempts to preserve rare species on federal lands through invasive species removal.

April 19

Briony Penn "Topic to be Announced"

Dr. Briony Penn has garnered many awards and much attention in her crusades to preserve the natural world and enlighten the public. Her enthusiasm and passion for the environment as well as her creative problem solving infuse Briony's writings, lectures and personal appearances. Her talk will be prove edifying and entertaining and not to be missed!

May 17

Dave Blundon "Grasses Are Too Hard!"

Ever felt like a subject is just too hard to attempt? But wouldn't it be wonderful to impress your friends and family with your astonishing grasp of grass identification?

Grasses and grass-like plants could be considered the foundation of our woodland, grassland and terrestrial herbaceous communities. Which are native and which are usurpers? David Blundon, Biology Chair at Camosun College, will take us on a virtual identification tour of our local graminoids.

NATIVE PLANT RESCUE

Nathalie Dechaine, NPSG member and Environmental Education Officer of the District of Saanich is offering a Native Plant Salvage Program orientation on the evening of January 31st. Contact her for more information at 475-5539 or 475-5475 or dechainn@saanich.ca

RELATED ORGANISATIONS

Check out these other very informative and educational organizations that deserve our support:

Victoria Natural History Society: www.vicnhs.bc.ca

Native Plant Society of BC: www.npsbc.org

South Van Is Mycological Society: www.svimcs.ca

NPSG WEBSITE

Have you visited our beautiful new website at www.npsg.ca? It has been built through the talented and generous efforts of Valerie Elliott and Stephan Jacob of ID2 Communications (www.id2.ca)

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MEMBERS PRESENTATION

We are looking for members to give five minute presentations at our meetings. Don't be shy, share your experience with a very accepting group. Contact Angela or Valerie at the meeting or through their emails, found at the end of the newsletter.

For all of us who wonder how to go from seed collection to germination, Heather Koni Pass has the answers. In March 2006 we published the Guidelines to Wildflower Propagule Collection as recommended by GOERT and in May 2006 we printed Heather's Directions for Cleaning Soft Berried Seeds. Heather's expertise comes from propagating plants for C.E. Jones. Still to come are approximate dates for seed collection of some local species.

DRY SEED CLEANING by Heather Koni Pass



Agoseris grandiflora

FLUFFY SEED HEADS

e.g.: *Holodiscus discolor*, *Spirea douglasii*.

You will need: sturdy gardening gloves, sieve of a size to allow seeds to pass thru, ice cream bucket, newspaper, small plastic bags, labels. With gloves on, take small handfuls of seedheads and rub between your hands over a newspaper to separate seeds and chaf. Then put this into sieve and sift. Save and label seeds, discard chaf.

CAPSULES & PODS

e.g.: *Penstemon*, *Rhododendron* & *Lathyrus*.

You will need: sturdy gardening gloves, rolling pin, large screen with mesh of size to let seeds pass thru, newspaper, small plastic bags, labels. With gloves on, put a handful of capsules or pods on screen on newspaper. GENTLY crush capsules/pods with rolling pin. Shake seeds thru screen. Save and label seeds. Discard chaf. *With many pods which curl open when dry, it is just as easy to flick the seeds out with your fingers.

CONES e.g.: *Alnus*, *Abies*, *Picea*

You will need: face mask, paper grocery bag, sieve of size large enough to allow seeds to pass thru. When cleaning *Alnus* cones, wear a face mask as I've found them to be allergenic. Put cones in paper bag and shake vigorously. Pour bag contents into sieve and sift seeds thru. Save and label seeds. Use cones for decorating. If you want to paint *alnus* cones, put cones in a paper bag, spray paint into bag and shake. Dry on blank newsprint.

WINGED SEEDS e.g.: *Acer*

You will need: sturdy gloves, newspaper. Wearing gloves, take small handfuls of maple keys and rub vigorously between your hands over newspaper. Winnow to separate seeds and chaf.

WINNOWERING

Sometimes, when separating chunkier seeds from chaf, better results are obtained by winnowing the seeds and chaf. It is easiest to work at a large table.

You will need: broom, dust pan, large plastic sheet to cover table, newspaper to cover plastic, fan, 2 deep buckets of same height, ice cream bucket. Cover table with plastic. Cover plastic with newspaper. Place one deep bucket at end of table, up-side down. Stand fan on this bucket with head in fixed position, facing down the length of the table. Turn fan on to low speed. Hold your hand in front of the fan so you can judge where the airflow is not too strong. Position the other deep bucket, right-side up, at this point in front of the fan. Put the seeds and chaf in the ice-cream bucket. This will be trial and error. Holding the ice-cream bucket above the deep bucket, slowly pour a little of the contents into the deep bucket. If positioning is correct, the heavier seeds will fall into the deep bucket and the chaf will blow onto the table. If the air current is too strong and everything blows onto

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the table, simple scoop up the mixture, move the deep bucket a little further away from the fan and try again. With some experience, it becomes easy to judge the distance from the fan.

Growing Quercus & Corylus

While I have only grown Garry Oak, I think this method should also apply to Hazelnut.

You will need: seeds, bucketful of water, two screens of same size with two pieces of black landscape cloth to match screens, weights or clamps to hold screens together...and later, 1 gal. pots full of leafy compost.

Put all seeds in bucket of water and soak for a while (overnight is good). Seeds that sink are viable. Throw the floaters away where critters can eat them.

This will also drown any worms in the seeds. Put a layer of landscape cloth on a screen. Spread seeds on this. Lay second layer of cloth over seeds. Put second screen on top. Weigh or clamp all together so seeds don't become critter snacks. Put this package on table in greenhouse or in shady spot outdoors. Water 3-4 times daily. As seeds sprout, transfer to pots of soil, ensuring that soil is gently tamped down while not damaging the sprout. Put one seed per pot. Water pot to ensure good contact between soil and seed. Continue to water regularly. Seedlings will remain in this pot until sold or ready to plant out carefully, taking care to not damage the root.

If you have only a handful of seeds, sprouting can be done in a canning jar with screen on top, as if sprouting seeds. I find the cupboard under the kitchen sink is a good, dark, warm spot.

VOLUNTEER and REGULARLY SCHEDULED OPPORTUNITIES

Beacon Hill Park Ivy Pull

Saturdays (except long weekends), 9 am-Noon southeast woods near Cook and Dallas. Bring gardening gloves. No dogs. Volunteers welcomed. Call Cornelia, 920-3556 or kacy@islandnet.com .

Hospital Rock

Tuesday and Sunday mornings from 9-noon, weather permitting (work in some rain but not snow). Help restore this very visible remnant Garry oak ecosystem at the Victoria General Hospital. Contact Agnes Lynn for more information at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns@shaw.ca)



Oak Bay Native Plant Garden

Meet every Fri. morning from 9-11, weather permitting. Corner of Beach Drive and Margate Avenue. New members welcome. Guided walks in March and April.

Brighton Avenue Walkway Restoration

Removal of invasives and re-planting of native species in a Garry Oak rocky outcrop situation. Sun. 9:30 - 11:30. Meet at Hampshire and Brighton, 2 blocks south of Oak Bay.

GORP Winter Work Activities

Volunteers appreciated! Contact Nathalie Dechaine at dechainn@saanich.ca or 475-5475

Saturday, January 13

9:30 am – 11:30 am Wetherby Park

Saturday, January 20

9:30 am – 11:30 am Chatterton Hill

Saturday, January 27

9:30 am – 11:30 am Mount Tolmie

Saturday, February 3

9:30 am – 11:30 am Camas Park

Saturday, February 10

9:30 am – 11:30 am Feltham Park

Saturday, February 17

9:30 am – 11:30 am Playfair Park

Saturday, February 24

9:30 am – 11:30 am Chatterton Hill

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EVENTS AND OUTINGS

For information on many environmental activities in our area check the Green Diary from the EcoNews website at <http://www.earthfuture.com/greendiary/>

Every Saturday at 1:30 pm:
Tour of Merve Wilkinson's Wildwood Forest, Ladysmith. Jay, 250-245-5540
<http://www.ecoforestry.ca/WildwoodMap.htm>

Jan 21, Sun 1 pm at Witty's Lagoon Nature House. What's that Evergreen? CRD Parks

Jan 23rd - 24th The Invasive Plant Council of BC is hosting it's annual forum in Vancouver. Invasive species are a great concern for anyone interested in native plants and ecosystems. For more information phone: 250-392-1400 or e-mail: info@invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca

Jan 28, Sun 9:30 am-noonish
Royal Roads Native Tree Walk
Hans Roemer will share his knowledge of the Big Trees on the Royal Roads University DND properties. A walking stick and good hiking boots are recommended. Dress for the weather. Bring a snack and a drink. Starts from Park & Ride across from the entrance to Royal Roads No pets please. Call Agnes at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns@shaw.ca) for more information.

Jan 28, Sun, 1pm Seymour Hill Hike, Thetis Lake. Meet info kiosk, main parking lot. Bus #50. CRD Parks

Feb 1, Thurs, 7pm An Inconvenient Truth: Video Discussion with Dr. Paz Buttedahl. Global warming - the biggest moral challenge facing our civilization. Free, Royal Roads. To register, 391-2600 ext 4801

Feb 4, Sun 10 am-all day Exploring Victoria's Heritage Trees - Part IV - Saanich
You must pre-register for this event by contacting Agnes at thelynns@shaw.ca or 721-0634. There will be a cost of \$10.00 per person payable when you register to cover expenses for gas and van. Bring lunch, snacks. No pets please.

Feb 4, Sun. 10-2 Hike Cedar Grove to Cougar Ridge. Meet in the Roche Cove parking lot off Gillespie Rd. Bring lunch, water and wear sturdy footwear. CRD Parks

Feb 17, Sun. 1 pm Horth Hill Highlights. Meet at info kiosk in parking lot off Tatlow Rd CRD Parks

Feb 25, Sun. 1 pm Durrance Lake Loop. Meet in parking lot off Durrance Close off Willis Point Rd

BOTANY NIGHT SCHEDULE

Hosted by VNHS and Adolf Ceska
Held at the Swan Lake Nature House (3873 Swan Lake-off McKenzie), 7:30 p.m. **the third Tues of the month**, Sept through May except December. Everyone welcome, bring your friends.

Jan 16 "Alpine flowers of Mongolia"
Jules Thomson will talk on the heart of north central Asia, a mountainous country on a plateau of 1580 m, offering beautiful wildflowers within the Altai mountains.

Feb 20 "Oaks, Mosses and Ferns of our Garry Oak Ecosystem"
Wynne Miles will talk about some rare and unusual non-flowering plants in our Garry oak stands. This includes lots of macroscopic and microscopic views of bryophytes.

Mar 20 "Wildflowers of Patagonia"
Yvonne Rorison will present her impressions from the fascinating flora of Patagonia.

Apr 17 Members Night.
Bring your slides or digital photos related or unrelated to botany of British Columbia, North America, or the Mother Earth. Contact aceska@telus.net if you plan to contribute.

May 15 "Plants and Poetry"
Andy MacKinnon will present a second installment of his Poetry Night. The last Botanical Poetry Night was a feast for the few courageous who attended. "Little bit of poetry does not kill you," says a Czech popular song of the old, good 1960's. Contact Andy at metchosinmacs@yahoo.ca if you want to include your own or others poetry.

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HIGHLY RECOMMENDED EXCURSION

My husband and I love to drive around BC and visit different areas of this huge and diverse province. At one time John's idea of a great driving experience was encapsulated in the 2 words "non-stop", indeed he would proudly recollect how he had driven across North America to the Grand Canyon, spent an hour admiring the view and then sped off to the west coast. I have a somewhat different style of driving that requires many long stops to admire and exclaim over various native plants I spy along the way.

Over the years our two styles have merged, I spend less time than I think necessary out of the car on my hands and knees trying to photograph new and exciting plant discoveries and John will, unprovoked, pull over to point out something of botanical interest that I have overlooked.

Last summer we managed a 3 day trip that took us over to Pemberton, above Anderson Lake (not for the faint of heart!) to Lillooet and Lytton. Many roadside treasures were found and photographed but even greater delights awaited us at Botanie, a sub-alpine area to the east of Lytton. Having only a very vague idea where to go, not even realizing that Botanie is a sub-alpine habitat, we meandered through forests, along cliff edges and through cattle pastures until we were forced to choose from a variety of logging roads. Climbing ever higher, we (well, me anyways!) were becoming somewhat nervous from the presence of many, many piles of bear scat.

Rounding a corner we could see the beginnings of a fantastic floral display that had me ready to leap out of the car and start photographing and identifying oodles of new plants. However, as we made the last turn, we startled a young grizzly into the thick underbrush. Instead of hours of slowly investigating every plant and butterfly, of which there was an abundance, I spent an anxious 15 minutes taking what photos I could before my nerve gave out. A subsequent visit the next day was also rewarded with another close encounter with "our" grizzly.

The floral display was magnificent though and a few of the hastily shot pictures made the passable grade. I've since spent many enjoyable hours reviewing and identifying them and reminiscing with my husband about our Botanie adventure. Of such are memories made.



Cirsium Brevistylum from Botanie

NEW BOOK ON BRYOPHYTES

After the enthusiastic October presentation by Terry McIntosh on mosses and lichens, many of us left with a new desire to learn more about these plants. Just released is the 2nd edition of *MOSES AND OTHER BRYOPHYTES - AN ILLUSTRATED GLOSSARY* by Bill and Nancy Malcolm. It retails for about \$80.00 plus shipping from New Zealand. Terry is putting together an order, contact him (ginkgo@shaw.ca) if you'd like to include this book in your library.

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(Sub-group of the Victoria Horticultural Society)

The NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP is a non-political group dedicated to learning about B.C. native plants, as wild populations and in garden settings, and to supporting conservation of native plants and their habitats. The group is guided by a volunteer steering committee. Members are encouraged to volunteer for this committee. Participation in outside events, by the group, or by individual members using the NPSG name, is dependent on approval of the steering committee or, where indicated, by the at-large membership. Activities requiring funding must receive approval by the general membership.

Native Plant Study group members are required to become members of the Victoria Horticultural Society. Fees are \$25.00/yr and help pay for insurance to cover field trips. Send \$ to Box 5081 Stn. B, Victoria, V8R 6N3