

# NPSG

FEBRUARY  
2008

BLACK KNAPWEED  
CENTAUREA NIGRA

## NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

### **INVASIVE PLANTS RAMPANT PESKY AND SOMETIMES DANGEROUS**

The January NPSG meeting had as its featured speaker Wendy Tyrrell, Coordinator of the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee (CIPC). In a lively and interactive presentation, Wendy gave an overview of why invasive plants are a problem on Vancouver Island, how they got here and what we can do to get rid of them.

Although there are many definitions for invasive plants, Wendy suggested that the term 'exotic weed' covers its two essential attributes: its origins from somewhere else and its rapid spread. Invasive plants are a threat to biodiversity and healthy ecosystems worldwide. They can out-compete native plants; destroying ecosystems and forage for fauna. They can alter soil chemistry and water flow. They can create a dense understory inhibiting native plant seedlings and creating a fire hazard. When they are removed, some invasives leave behind huge seed banks that can last for decades.

Costly to control, invasive plants add an economic burden for foresters, farmers and ecosystem manag-

ers. They also create animal and human health concerns, as some invasive plants are toxic or poisonous. Here on Vancouver Island, the endangered Garry oak ecosystem is threatened by invasive plants, as well as by urban and rural development. Removal of exotic weeds has become a priority here, but Wendy reminded everyone of the need to replace invasive plants with native species so the vacuum created by removal won't be filled immediately by more opportunistic weeds.

Two toxic invasive plants created the most discussion: giant hogweed and daphne laurel. Wendy emphasized the need for safety precautions in trying to eradicate these two species. Giant hogweed resembles the native cow parsnip, but it grows much taller, twice the height of an adult. Its sap is toxic, producing contact dermatitis. Touching any part of the plant can result in photosensitivity. Clearly this situation brings challenges to anyone wanting to eradicate hogweed. To make matters worse, the plant is also a prolific seed-producer.

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 2008



INVASIVE SPECIES

CENTAURIUM

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Daphne laurel is rampant in Victoria, particularly in older neighbourhoods like Fairfield, where it's a garden escapee. Although daphne laurel doesn't prove to be toxic for all people, it can be almost fatal to others. One person told of choking and hardly being able to breathe after inhaling fumes from the plant. Parks Canada and the City of Victoria have special safety regulations for people who remove daphne. A third toxic plant is poison hemlock, which looks like a giant carrot or Queen Anne's lace. Care must be taken to wash all gloves and clothes after handling the plant.

Other invasive plants are still being sold in nurseries. English holly, with its red berries, is a good example of a plant readily available through the region. Nurseries need to replace English holly with sterile cultivars, many of which have 'Blue' in the variety name. Wendy noted that the CIPC and the Invasive Plant Council of BC are working with the nursery trade to increase their awareness of the impact of selling invasive plants to gardeners. Other invasive plants still found for sale at nurseries are English ivy, yellow flag iris, English hawthorn and cotoneaster.

The urgency surrounding the rapid spread of carpet burweed was also discussed at length. It will be the topic at the next Botany Night of the Victoria Natural History Society. It is a small plant and hard to identify. It has moved from Ruckle Park on Saltspring to Beacon Hill Park, Cattle Point and many RV parks in Southern Vancouver Island. It is very difficult to eradicate. The seeds are barbed and attach to animals' paws and camping equipment; they can also lodge in grazers' mouths. The spread of carpet burweed underlines the importance of having a rapid response team in place for invasive plant emergencies.

Wendy finished her talk by describing what is being done on the Island to combat invasive plants. There are many local or neighbourhood groups who regularly remove invasives in parks or natural areas in the CRD. The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team ([www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)) is an excellent source of information on invasive plants and on restoration work with native plant species. The CIPC and the Invasive Plant Council of BC are busy educating the public, government and the nursery trade about the economic and ecological costs of invasive plants, as well as offering more efficient and effective techniques for eradication.

Wendy finished off her talk by saying we need to pay attention to NIMBY: no invasives in my back yard.

Written by Pat Boyle (thanks Pat!!)



BROOM BRIGADE AT DEVONIAN PARK METCHOSIN

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 2008

## FROM ECOZINE MAGAZINE ISSUE 5

[www.hctf.ca/wild/resources/ecozine/ecozine.htm](http://www.hctf.ca/wild/resources/ecozine/ecozine.htm)

- Approximate number of insect species in BC: 35,000
- Estimated number of vascular plant species in BC: 2,073
- Percentage of vascular plant species endangered or threatened in BC: 12
- Number of mammal species in BC: 143
- Percentage of mammals endangered or threatened in BC: 10
- Number of pairs of the now extinct great auk seabird to have bred on Newfoundland's Funk Island in the eighteenth century: 100,000
- Number of grizzly bears killed each year because of their developed dependence on garbage: 50
- Number of black bears killed each year because of their developed dependence on garbage: 800
- Total number of deaths caused by bear attacks over three years (1994, 1995, 1996): 4
- Distance in kilometres travelled during complete migration of Swainson's Hawk: 8,000
- Maximum distance in kilometres travelled by northern caribou during migrations: 5,000
- Non-stop distance in kilometres travelled by hummingbirds during migrations over the Gulf of Mexico: 800
- Percentage of fish threatened or endangered in BC: 32
- Minimum length in centimetres of male rattlesnakes found successfully mating with female rattlesnakes in BC: 72
- Number of eggs laid by horseshoe crab: 80,000
- Percentage of bird species that are monogamous to some degree: 90
- Average air speed in km/hour of migrating songbirds: 32
- Average air speed in km/hour of migrating Canada geese: 50
- Length in centimetres of horns on a mature male bighorn sheep: 127



### RED MAIDS (*Calandrinia ciliata*)

I have only found this brilliant jewel in the most unlikely place, in a mown lawn, formerly a farmer's field, that I had dug over to put in a native plant garden! It is not the easiest plant to spot, lying close to the ground and opening its flashy but minute flower only when the sun is shining. Red Maids are members of the Portulacaceae family, along with the Claytonia and Montia genus'. Illustrated Flora of BC states that it is locally common on SE Van Is and the Gulf Islands, occurring in moist, gravelly or grassy vernal sites in the lowland zone. I have let it spread into the sunny garden where it self seeds profusely when competition is controlled. Blooms end of April.

### CLAYTONIA AND MONTIA

Sometimes just figuring out the genus is a big step! I will delve into the species next issue but to separate the Genus:

- *Claytonia* has a basal rosette of leaves,
- *Montia* does not.
- *Claytonia* has opposite stem leaves,
- *Montia* has alternate stem leaves except in the case of *Montia fontana*, which has opposite leaves.

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 2008

## NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP (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.

**Chair:** Angela Deering  
**Co-chair:** Valerie Elliott  
**Speakers:..** Moralea Milne  
**Treasurer:** Catherine Fryer  
**Newsletter:** . Moralea Milne  
**Plant Rescue:** Todd Doherty  
**Field Trips:** Jean Forrest & Pat Johnston  
**Membership:** ..... Agnes Lynn  
**Publicity:** Valerie Elliott  
**Room Set-up:** Pat & Wayne Robertson  
**Plant Raffle:** . Heather Pass  
**List-serve:** Linda Beare & John Olafson  
**Refreshments:** Pat McMahon  
**VHS Liaison:** Heather Pass

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

The NPSG Newsletter is produced by Moralea Milne

Victoria Natural History Society  
[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)  
Native Plant Society of BC  
[www.npsbc.org](http://www.npsbc.org)  
South Vancouver Island Mycological Society  
[svims.ca](http://svims.ca)

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 2008

*For UVic events: New parking policy--pay parking is in effect 24 hours a day. You must purchase a \$2 parking permit for the evening.*

## MEETING SCHEDULE

**March 20**.....Rm D110

Lindsay Coulter TO THE RESCUE: protecting B C's rich biodiversity

B.C. is home to 76 per cent of our nation's bird species, 70 per cent of its freshwater fish species and 66 per cent of its butterflies. Unfortunately, the province's biological wealth is under threat – more than 1,300 species are at risk of disappearing. Find out which species are at risk of disappearing and how you can help.

Lindsay Coulter is the Conservation Policy Analyst with the David Suzuki Foundation.

**April 17**.....Rm D116

Todd Manning Wildlife and Trees in BC

The slow demise of a tree opens up myriad opportunities to increase and sustain biodiversity in our forests.

Todd is a Habitat Forester, Wildlife Ecologist and Arborist as well as co-author of Wildlife and Trees in BC.

**May 15**.....Rm to be announced

Fran Benton No Love for Langford

How living in Langford changed Lindsay from a mild mannered botanist into a Garry Oak Meadow activist. Fran Benton teaches at Malaspina College

*The Native Plant Study Group meets on the third Thursday of the month from Sept through May except Dec at 7 at the MacLaurin Building, UVic. Please join us. Membership fees are \$15.00 annually or a \$2.00 charge for drop-in. Check Room Schedule for new meeting locations. Visit our website at [www.npsg.ca](http://www.npsg.ca) generously developed and hosted by Valerie Elliott through her design firm id2*

**VNHS Botany Nights** are held at Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 pm, everyone welcome, no charge

**Tues, Mar 18** Plants and Landscapes of the North Yukon Slope with Terry McIntosh

**Tues, Apr 15** Treasures of the Cloud Forest: Botanical Explorations in Vietnam's Huang Lien Mountains with Brian White

## EVENTS AND OUTINGS

For information on many environmental activities in our area check the **Green Diary** from the EcoNews website at: [www.earthfuture.com/greendiary/](http://www.earthfuture.com/greendiary/) Check the **CRD Parks** website for detailed information on their many programs; wear appropriate clothing for the weather and sturdy footwear for all outings: [www.crd.bc.ca/parks](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks)

For all **VNHS activities**, please contact Agnes at 721-0634 or email her ([thelynns@shaw.ca](mailto:thelynns@shaw.ca)) if you need more information. No pets please. Bring a lunch and plenty to drink for the all day outings.

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

**Sat Feb 23** CRD 1pm Devonian Park, The Plant and People Connection. Meet in parking lot off William Head Rd, Metchosin.

**Sun Feb 24** CRD 1pm Explore Horth Hill. Meet in parking lot off Tatlow Rd, North Saanich

**Sun Feb 24** VNHS Identifying Native Trees and Shrubs in Winter. Wander around Ten Mile Point, visiting Konukson and Phyllis Parks. Start at 3913 Woodhaven Terrace, off Tudor Ave at 10:00 a.m.

**Sun Mar 2** CRD 1pm What is that Plant? Meet at Mill Hill info kiosk off Atkins Rd Langford

**Sun Mar 9** CRD 10-2 Upper Thetis and Beyond. Meet at lakeside parking area west of main parking lot. View Royal

**Mar 21** (Good Friday) VNHS 10 am-? (all day) Satinflowers at Mount Wells. Meet at the Humpback Rd Parking lot

**Mar 23** (Easter Sunday) VNHS Satinflowers at Juan de Fuca 10 am. Meet at Juan de Fuca Rec Centre, at the parking lot closest to Victoria

**Sun Mar 23** CRD 1-3:30 Bear Hill Spring Prowl. View the wildflowers. Meet at parking lot off Brookleigh Rd, Saanich

**Sun Mar 30** CRD 11-2:30 Mt Wells. Hike to the top and view the spring wildflowers. Meet at info kiosk in parking lot off Humpback Rd, Langford.

**Fri Apr 18** Visit to Honeymoon Bay Wildflower Reserve You must register for this event as the

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

FEBRUARY 2008

number of visitors is limited. VNHS members get preference. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 am to car-pool. Contact Agnes after Mar 3

**Sun Apr 27** VNHS Mount Tzouhalem Ecological Reserve. You must register for this event as the number of visitors is limited. VNHS members get preference. We will car-pool and start from Victoria at 9:00 am.

**Sat, Apr 26** Photography of Native Plants  
Burl Jantzen is an experienced photographer and a veteran science educator. This intensive workshop will appeal to anyone who wants to improve their plant photography, including both beginning and experienced photographers. The focus will be on native plants, from mosses to maples, with an emphasis on practical strategies for creating "images with impact." Pre-register at (250) 479-0211. Cost is \$44 (Friends of the Swan Lake Sanctuary \$40) 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The **Anti-ivy League of Cadboro Bay** is fighting an ongoing battle. Is your warrior spirit ready to tackle the soul-sucking expanse of this pernicious weed? Contact Agnes at 721-0634 or thelynns at shaw.ca for more info.

**Hospital Rock:** Contact Agnes as above  
Volunteer at **Swan Lake Christmas Hill** Nature Sanctuary For further details contact Joan at 479-0211 or email volunteer@swanlake.bc.ca.

**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 at islandnet.com .

**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. Work each Sun. 9:30 - 11:30. Meet at Hampshire and Brighton, 2 blocks south of Oak Bay.

## EARLY BLOOMERS AT CAMAS HILL FEBRUARY 19, 2008



*Saxifraga rufidula*  
Rusty-haired Saxifrage



*Arctostaphylos columbiana*  
Hairy Manzanita