

September 2009

NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

On June 8, 2009 the Native Plant Study Group (NPSG) became an affiliate chapter of the Native Plant Society of British Columbia (NPSBC). After its inception as a study group of the Victoria Horticultural Society (VHS) over a decade and a half ago, members voted to partner with a native plant organization with a specific mandate to protect, conserve and educate about BC's habitats. We are extremely grateful to the VHS for all its support over the years, and particularly through the transition period. Over the next few months we'll be continuing this transitional journey and build a stronger network for native plant environments across the province.

The NPSG would like to welcome back all of its returning members, and would like to greet all new members. We look forward to this coming year with everyone.

Life at Swan Lake

By: Hilary Stead

Tree frogs, leopard frogs and salamanders will continue to inhabit the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary if there is somewhere for them to lay their eggs. Restoring or recreating the native habitat that will give them half a chance is what June Pretzer and her colleagues are working hard to accomplish at the small but important urban greenspace.

There have been many changes over the years to the area, surrounded by previous agricultural land. Fertile lower lands were removed and over

time a non-native monoculture took its place.

Preserving native habitat at Swan Lake will stave off extinction for alligator lizards, Townsend's voles and rough-skinned newts.

Encouraging native plantings in surrounding municipal backyards will attract butterflies and birds and the insects that form the basis of the food chain.

It is possible that it is already too late for sharp-tailed snakes, but on Christmas Hill June and her colleagues are removing Scotch

broom, ivy, purple salsify and other invasive plants in the hope of making the area hospitable again for the camas, yellow woollyheads, golden ferns and other inhabitants of the native ecosystem.

In a remnant alder patch off Ralph Road, June's team will recapture a natural spring, dig up the salsify and make depressions that are big enough for ephemeral ponds for the tree and leopard frogs, away from the ravenous, invasive, non-native bullfrogs and from the sunfish and the sunperch in Swan Lake that would eat their eggs.



Life at Swan Lake Con't



Acer macrophyllum— Oregon maple

They will plant an alder woodland in an area that their research shows was once a natural alder bush.

People are one of the biggest problems. A survey of small mammals has revealed an absence of rodents, an important food source for owls. June attributes this to the incompatibility between dogs and wildlife. People love to walk their dogs in the sanctuary, but dogs chase deer, disturb nesting birds and stress small mammals, slowing their reproduction and causing them to leave.

Aggressive non-native plant species are also a huge challenge. In one area the groundcover is almost 100 per cent ivy. June and her colleagues are pulling the ivy back from the trail. They are looking for barley straw to clean up the toxic algae. They are using cardboard as mulch and planting willow stakes to suppress reed canary grass. When the ground is not so rich it will be a good place to plant native sedges.

The bottom line, June told the May gathering of the Native Plant Study Group, is that these pockets of land are precious. We are losing our native species. As always, funding is scarce for all the work that needs to be done. Anyone who is interested in volunteering on a regular basis should contact the sanctuary at 250-479-0211.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Anti-Ivy League of Cadboro Bay:

Seapoint Dr., Saanich
Volunteer for great camaraderie, loads of fun and a feeling of satisfaction every Wed. and Sat. from 9:00a.m.-12:00 p.m.. Currently working in Konukson Park.
Contact Harry Drage | T: 250-477-9544 | hdrage(at)shaw.ca

Brodick/Bow Park

West of Univ. Heights shopping centre off of Cedar Hill Rd. invasive species removal and site restoration every Monday 10:00 am– Noon. Training, tools, and equipment provided.
Contact Judy Spearing | T: 250-472-0515 | jandd_spearing(at)shaw.ca



Volunteer Opportunities Con't

Mt. Douglas Park

Alien, invasive species removal and site restoration. Schedule may vary. Contact Judy Spearing | T: 250-472-0515 | [jandd_spearing\(at\)shaw.ca](mailto:jandd_spearing@shaw.ca)

Glendale Gardens Native Plant Demonstration Garden

505 Quayle Rd., Saanich

Meet every Wednesday morning, snow, rain or shine. Before coffee we work in the Western Woods restoration project and after coffee we work in the native garden.

Volunteers welcome.

Contact Jean Forrest | T: 658-5740 | [jforrest\(at\)telus.net](mailto:jforrest@telus.net)

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

3873 Swan Lake Rd., Victoria

Swan Lake has a wide range of volunteer opportunities involving plants: nature interpretation, gardening with native plants, and removal of invasive plants.

Contact Robyn Burton | T: 250-479-0211 | [volunteer\(at\)swanlake.bc.ca](mailto:volunteer@swanlake.bc.ca)

The Friends of Beacon Hill Park: NEVPAN's 'Blitz' at Moss Rock

Friends of Beacon Hill Park's ad hoc umbrella group is called the Native Ecosystems in Victoria Public Areas Network (NEVPAN). Meetings are held on the last Saturday of most months (not usually July and

November). Fred Hook holds the meetings at the Beacon Hill Maintenance Building and requests that anyone interested in attending these meetings send him an email to be added to the invitation list.

NEVPAN's website has details for some (not all) of the groups and a map showing all of the relevant locations.

The groups that work in Moss Rock will be holding a 'blitz' to clean out the ravine on the south (Moss Street) side on Sunday, October 4, from 10:00am to 1:00. The main targets will be Periwinkle and Ivy and the ravine is mostly steep so will require a good level of fitness.

Volunteers will need to come dressed for the terrain and weather and will need to bring their own tools.

Contact Fred Hook | T: 250-361-0623 | [fhook\(at\)victoria.ca](mailto:fhook@victoria.ca)

Or visit NEVPAN's website: www.nevpan.org,

The Native Plant Study Group meets on the third Thursday of the month from September through May at the MacLaurin Building, UVic. Please contact Valerie Elliott for information regarding fees. Check Room Schedule for new meeting locations .

Please visit our lovely website: www.npsg.ca designed and maintained by NPSG co-chair Valerie Elliott, co-owner of design company iD2 (id2.ca). Thanks Valerie and Stephan for the superb work and generous commitment!



Events & Outings

..CRD Parks:

www.crd.bc.ca/parks

..Native Plant Society of BC:

www.npsbc.org

..South Vancouver Island

Mycological Society:

www.svims.ca

..Swan Lake & Christmas Hill

Nature Sanctuary:

www.swanlake.bc.ca

..Vancouver Island Rock and

Alpine Society:

www.virags.ca

..Victoria Natural History Society:

www.vicnhs.bc.ca

Thursday, October 1

SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

There will be a brief business meeting chaired by new president, Dawn Hanna, followed by a potluck lunch. If you can bring something good to eat, that's great. If not, come anyway.

After lunch Terry McIntosh will deliver a presentation: **Musings on Contemporary Taxonomy and the Conservation of Native Plants in BC:**

Botanist and bon vivant Terry McIntosh takes a look at recent taxonomic changes, the pros and cons of dichotomous keys, what makes a good plant list, rare plant

MONTHLY MEETING

The Miniature Beauty of Fungal Microscopy Oluna Ceska will show us, through photos, the fascinating beauty of fungal samples under the microscope and explain their identification features. Two microscopes with slides will be available for use by attendees. Pacific Forestry Centre, 507 West Burnside Road, Victoria, B.C., at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 20

BOTANY NIGHT Farewell to Summer

Bring your slides, memory sticks, or CD's with photographs that you would like to show to others. Let Adolf know how many photos you

will bring and the medium at least a week before.

University of Victoria, Elliot 167; 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Bring a friend.

Contact [aceska\(at\)telus.net](mailto:aceska(at)telus.net) | T: 250-477-1211.

Saturday, September 26

NPSBC Native Plant Society of British Columbia

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Place: Inverholme School, the first historic building near the Riverside Picnic Area at Deas Island.

protection, and more entertaining looks at native plants in BC.

If the weather cooperates we'll round out the afternoon by looking for interesting plants in the local area.

Come out, support your Society, and enjoy some camaraderie with other native plant lovers.

Thursday, October 14

Quentin Cronk "The Peavines of BC"

Lathyrus, the peavine genus, is well represented in BC by some striking species. This illustrated tour of the peavines of the province will take in their



Events & Outings Con't

fascinating natural history: ecology, distributional patterns and pollination (not to mention that perennial question of how to tell – reliably – a peavine from a vetch!). They are found in very diverse habitats, for instance: *Lathyrus ochroleucus* (creamy pea) in dry pinewoods, *L. palustris* (marsh pea) in wet estuarine meadows, and *L. japonicus* (sea pea) on sandy shorelines. *L. japonicus* floats around the world's oceans and has even reached New Zealand. Peavines are related to the sweet pea of horticultural fame and, unsurprisingly, many of our native species are highly garden-worthy. Peavines are also curious in that the terminal leaflets are converted into touch-sensitive tendrils and the biological basis of this has recently been worked out.

Quentin Cronk was educated in botany at Cambridge University in the UK and has taught at Oxford and Edinburgh Universities, before becoming professor in Plant Science at the University of BC. He has published more than 100 papers on different aspects of botany, including island biology, plant conservation, plant systematics and evolution, molecular systematics and, more recently, plant evolutionary molecular genetics.

Location and Time:

Van Dusen Botanical Garden, Cedar Room (at) 7:00 p.m.
5251 Oak Street (at) 37th Avenue
Vancouver BC

Free Admission; Free parking.
Contact Ron Long | T: 604-469-1651
| rlphoto@shaw.ca
and/or contact Dawn Hanna | T: 604-831-5069 | dawnhanna@telus.net

Reoccurring Events

Victoria Natural History Society

Go to www.vicnhs.bc.ca to become a member and support our local Natural History Society!

Botany Night: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30 pm, Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Contact Darren Copley | dccopley@telus.net |

For all VNHS events: No pets please. Bring a lunch and drinks for the all day outings. Where appropriate attire and footwear.
Contact Agnes | T: 250-721-0634 | thelynns@shaw.ca

Check the VNHS website for events at www.vicnhs.bc.ca. UVic parking policy--pay parking is in effect 24 hours a day. You must purchase a \$2 parking permit for the evening. Save yourself the trouble by riding your bike or taking the bus! (<http://www.bctransit.com/regions/vic/>).

The NPSG gratefully acknowledges the support of the RNS program at UVic in securing the use of the rooms and facilities.



Local Native Plant Gardens

Glendale Gardens Native Plant Demonstration Garden:

505 Quayle Rd, Saanich

The garden features rocky outcrops, Garry oak and spring flowering bulbs such as camas, shooting stars and fawn lilies. There are presently 75 species of native plants in the garden, and new species are being added continually.

Contact | T: 250- 479-6162

Gonzales Bay Native Plant Garden

1843 Crescent Rd, Victoria

A residential seaside native plant garden that includes Garry oaks, western crabapple, redosier dogwood, woolly sunflower, mock-orange, sedum, western hawthorn, hairy manzanita, native grasses and bulbs. There is also a small Garry oak restoration area to the east of the Boyle property, beside the walkway to Gonzales Beach. The restoration area is accessible from the sidewalk along Crescent Road.

Contact Pat Boyle | T: 250-370-1812

Kings Road Native Plant Garden

Kings Rd at Roseberry Ave.
Victoria

This site is a residential native plant garden in the Oaklands neighbourhood of Victoria. Garry oak habitat was restored over a period of four years by volunteers meeting once a week.

Contact | info(at)goert.ca

Oak Bay Native Plant Garden

Beach Dr at Margate St, Victoria

This Oak Bay landmark was donated by Mrs. Ada Beaven in 1939 for the purpose of developing a native plant garden. The site is of great ecological value as a green space and nature reserve. It acts as a preserve for plants indigenous to southern Vancouver Island, many of which are endangered by development. The garden includes more than 120 plant species from all areas of lower Vancouver Island, as

well as a restored Garry oak meadow.

Contact Carol Davies | T: 250-475-4412 | ecdavies(at)uvic.ca or
Parks and Recreation, Oak Bay | T: 250-592-7275

Saanich Community Church Native Plant Garden

4566 West Saanich Rd, Saanich

The garden is being developed under existing mature oak and fir trees and aims to reintroduce species that may have grown on the site before it was developed.

Contact Burl Jantzen | 250-475-0406
| info(at)saanichcommunity.ca
www.saanichcommunity.ca

Royal BC Museum

675 Belleville St., Victoria

One of the oldest Native Plant Gardens in western Canada (begun in 1967) and features approximately 300 native species.

Contact Ken Marr | T: 250-356-8176
| kmarr(at)royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

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.

Co-Chair: Valerie Elliott | co-chair(at)npsg.ca

Co-Chair: Nathalie Dechaine | nathaliedechaine(at)hotmail.com

Speakers: Nathalie Dechaine, Kristen Harrison

Treasurer: Joan Varley

Newsletter: Ilana Kronick, Hilary Stead, Kristen Harrison

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