

2006 AUTUMN

The Oracle

A newsletter from the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society

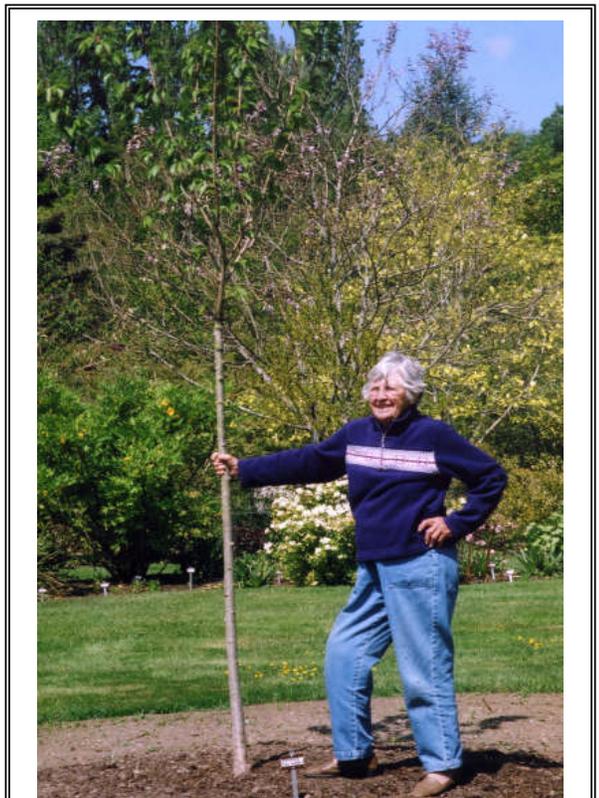
Darts Hill Garden Park is located on 16th Avenue, at 170th Street, Surrey, B.C. Accessible by pre-booked tours only. Call 604-501-5050 for your tour.

Comments from the Chair:

Susan Murray

The Fall of 2006 is upon us and the volunteers of Darts Hill Garden have been busily working on behalf of the garden. The Publicity and Marketing Committee, under the able direction of Greg Simms has produced a new full color brochure of the garden. This is a wonderful addition to the new tools created in the past year to market the garden to the wider community. Don't forget that the presentation *Darts Hill Through the Seasons* is now available as a PowerPoint presentation or as a 35 mm slide presentation. If your service group, garden club, school or any other organization would like to have a speaker come and talk, please contact our speaker coordinator, James Good at 604-536-2199 or email at jamogood@telus.net. James will put you in touch with a fabulous speaker who will undoubtedly extol the virtues of the garden to one and all.

The first installment of our photo contest; January to June 30, received many lovely entries. The winner has not yet been selected at the time of writing. Send your images, digital or otherwise for the ongoing photo contest July 1- December 31, 2006 to Kathy Piccott at the city of Surrey. Please contact Kathy to find out how to submit your entries at kmpiccott@surrey.ca or 604-598-5767.



Francisca with the newly planted Prunus 'Tai Haku' (Great White Cherry) which will be in the new bed #50.

Comments from the Chair: (cont'd...)

City staffers, Neal Aven and Alan Chung continue the time consuming but oh, so necessary task of updating the Plant Collections database. The database was first created in the mid nineties shortly after Francisca gifted the garden to the city. Much work, on an ongoing basis needs to be done in this area. Metal hangs tags and plastic display labels now adorn most of the plants in Bed 2B. Beds 1, 3A, 3B, 4 and 5 have been inventoried and are ready for the Labeling Group to research the most current plant nomenclature for the plants in these beds prior to label creation. If you are interested in volunteering for this subcommittee please contact me at susan.murray@telus.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

The Propagation Group, under the umbrella of the Garden Operations committee continues to collect material for propagation and eventual plant sales. If you are interested in volunteering for this subcommittee please contact Sanne Dryborough at sdryborough@shaw.ca or 604- 536-4506.

Every activity contributes to the garden's development and I am happy to report the steps that we have made together so far this year on behalf of Darts Hill Garden Park.

On behalf of all the Board Members of the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust, I wish each and every one of you a pleasant fall. Hopefully the rains will have returned again to water all our thirsty gardens! See you in the garden on an upcoming Member's Day!



The new beds #46E & 46W at the top of the upper orchard are now planted out with a variety of plants including small trees, shrubs, perennials, heathers, grasses and a few annuals.



Bed 46 West with the small tree *Cinnamomum 'japonicum'* on the right and the lemon scented *Agastache 'accapulco'* on the left. In the background *Vitex 'agnus-castus'* shows off its late summer blue flowers

Imagine!! Bed #50 (provided by Graham Laine)

As a celebration of Francisca's 90th Birthday this past spring, Bed #50 is being developed. As on the front page of this newsletter, the Prunus 'Tai Haku' has been planted. A second similar flowering cherry (perhaps Prunus 'Shiro Fugen' will also be in this bed along with the two Rhododendrons named R.H.'Francisca' and R.H.'Edwin' which will be moved from the lower east end of bed #35. The fifth major plant in this bed will be a Malus 'Sargentii' presently growing in bed #17 and should enjoy being moved out into more light. Bed #50 can be found in the southern part of the Garden, just above the magnolia walk.



Please find this newsletter at
www.dartshill.ca to view all photos
in colour

The Mystery of the Ancient Art of Tree Pruning Unveiled

(information provided by the International Society of Arboriculture)

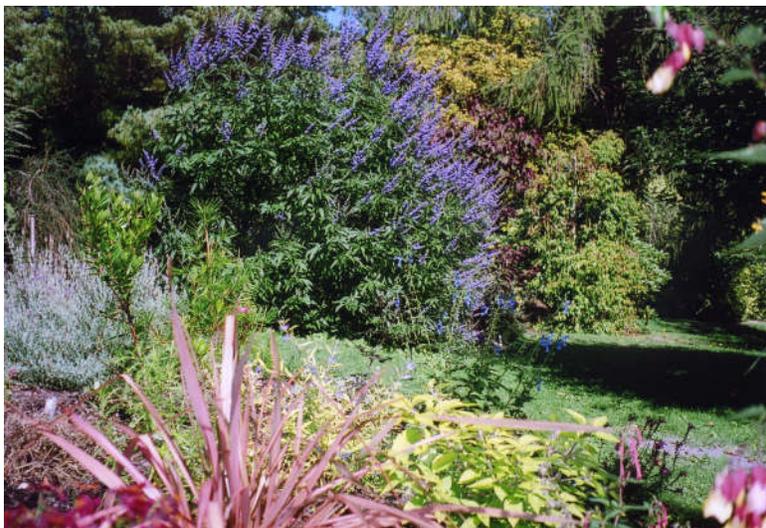
Pruning, the mysterious adventure where the tree often suffers serious limb loss and a fair bit of unintended abuse. Likely many a pruner can show scars, remember teary eyes laden with oak sawdust and, perish the thought, show a hand missing a digit or two! Arising from our infernal pathological desire to control our natural environment humans venture forth with the best of intentions looking to 'straighten out that ugly looking maple, dear!', saw and loppers in hand, broken ladder, and without the necessary insurance to comfort the family should one slip ungraciously off the ladder into the embrace of mother earth.

The mystery in tree pruning is a mystery in self deception. We convince ourselves something needs to be done, I have seen good old George next door do it, so here I go! When, really, a tree is just like a human.

Sure, everyone develops differently and we are all special in the eyes of our mothers. We still all have two eyes, nose, mouth, stomach, toes, belly button and only some minor differences like is it an inny or an outy? Trees are the same, essentially needing the same loving understanding that you would give to your child that awkwardly grows through puberty with a bit of lean from poor posture and then straightening out with a little corrective encouragement!

Training trees to last the years they deserve means accepting the notion that pruning is intended to encourage one, not two, central leader (trunk) with branches spaced evenly around and up the trunk. The best branches are at 90 degrees, or perpendicular to the trunk, the worst branches are parallel with the trunk. Get rid of those. If you train a tree with the aforementioned in mind you will be allowed into the next level of life, be it heaven or reincarnated as an eagle.

Good luck and good pruning, and read *An Illustrated Guide to Pruning*, by Edward F. Gillman, Delmar Publishers. Even I can understand it! Or go to <http://www.treesaregood.com>, pruning young tree, which is great information provided by the International Society of Arboriculture. Otherwise, leave the loppers in the shed and relax.



Vitex Agnus-Castus (Chaste Tree)



The red foliage of Cercis 'Forest Pansy' stands out against adjacent trees and shrubs.

Autumn Member's Days:

September 17, October 15, November 19

11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

This garden is spectacular at any time of the year but in the Fall season the garden is ablaze with colour and lush with exotic fruit. Some early signs of Fall are the yellow leaves and vanilla aroma of the Katsura tree. It's hard to miss the orange/bronze leaves and fruit of the Medlar Tree or the pungent spicy scents from the dark green leaves of *Rhododendron glaucophyllum*.

A favourite mid-Fall pleasure is discovering the blue fruit from the *Decaisnea fargessii* called Blue bean. The common name for this fruit is "deadman's fingers, which describes the way the fruit hangs from the branches.



City employees have been digging up the garden!!

Drainage isn't a very exciting thing to write about, but it does help the garden. Over August, drainage has been installed in a number of areas. You will notice new drainage in the orchard – this will help control a perennial wet spot.

Further drainage has been installed just above the location where the new bed #50 is being developed. This will make certain Francisca's 90th birthday tree and the two Rhododendrons that Alleyne Cook bred and named after Francisca and Edwin will thrive.

Subsequently, these new drainage areas are directed to the existing drainage on the south property line, which explains why the meadow-area had been excavated.

The annual **Autumn Open House** is scheduled for **Saturday, October 21st** from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. We have seen from 50 to 500 visitors in the garden on this day. If you are able to help for a couple of hours at the Meet and Greet area, please call Kathy at 604-598-5767.



All photos in this edition have been provided by Graham Laine

An organization working in partnership with the City of Surrey to ensure the preservation of Darts Hill Garden Park

