

THE ORACLE

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DARTS HILL
GARDEN CONSERVANCY TRUST SOCIETY



DARTS HILL
• Garden Park •

August 2017
57th Edition

DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK - 1633 170TH STREET, SURREY, B.C.

www.dartshill.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR: SUSAN MURRAY

Since the last edition of the *Oracle*, Metro Vancouver has been blessed with a hot, dry late spring and summer. Perhaps a bit too dry, looking out my window and viewing the extreme toastiness of the grass. It has been difficult keeping up with the watering needs of some of the plants in my garden and one or two newly planted specimens have perished. Darts Hill Garden Park, in places, has an equally dry look but the well-established plant collections are weathering this hot, dry spell with aplomb. The sunny weather has also brought many new visitors to the garden who enjoyed several special Sounds of Summer musical events hosted by the city of Surrey. Garden Strolls on Saturdays and Sundays throughout June and July were well attended as well.

I trust everyone has noted the recent addition of four new benches to the garden, with more benches planned for 2018! Beautiful Frances and Andrews benches were installed in Bed 36, Bed 43 and the top end of the Tractor road near the Propagation Area in July. I tested each one and found them well sited, each with unique views of the garden.

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Benches in Bed 36 and along the tractor road. Photo: S. Murray

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Some of the historic records as organised by N. Armstrong – Photo: K. Piccott

I have some exciting news to share with the DHGCTS membership. Margaret Cadwaladr, a Society member and author, has graciously volunteered to take on the task of writing a book about Ed and Francisca Darts and the development of the garden. I am very excited about the Darts Hill Book project and encourage everyone, if asked by Margaret for an interview, to participate enthusiastically. It is anticipated that the project will take approximately 3 years from start to finish. Funding for the project is anticipated from revenue from the Darts Hill Garden Endowment Fund which is administered by SurreyCares on behalf of the City of Surrey and the DHGCTS.

Darts Hill Garden Park is an evolving and changing collection of living organisms. The stewardship role of the DHGCTS is to ensure the vision of Ed and Francisca Darts is maintained in perpetuity. The vision states that garden is to be a place of rare and unusual plants, not that everything must be exactly as planted by Mrs. Darts.

In July, the Grand Dame, the hybrid walnut just below Darts House, suffered significant scaffold branch damage when strong storm winds coming from an unusual direction buffeted the garden. The huge damaged limb was quickly removed but it is reminder that the garden is full of living things that age. Trees and shrubs will, in time, decline and die. Nothing stays the same and nor should we wish it to.



Photo: S. Murray



Photo: M. Fish

Autumn beckons but the forecast is for sunny skies in the coming days, so enjoy your own garden while waiting for Darts Hill Garden Park to reopen after the August rest period. The garden will be open September 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 30 from 11- 3 pm. September 16 is a Member's Day and Plant Sale while September 23 is the Fall Open House and Plant Sale. Several special events are planned for the Fall Open house, it should be fun. Saturday, October 21 will be the Final Fall Open House for 2017. See you in the garden in September!

DARTS HILL LABELING TEAM MAKING REMARKABLE PROGRESS

submitted by Nancy Oike

Question: What has

- *several brains;*
- *twelve pairs of hands and knees;*
- *boundless energy;*
- *excellent teamwork skills;*
- *scores of years' experience in the horticultural field as city park garden designer/ supervisor/ nursery worker/ rhododendron grower/native plant advocate/and garden director;*
- *over 20 years' Master Gardener experience;*
- *skills in MS Excel, MS Word, CorelDraw, and specialized software;*
- *research skills;*
- *plant identification skills;*
- *a passion for Darts Hill Garden; and*
- *a strong desire to see every single perennial, shrub, and tree recorded in the Darts Hill inventory and identified with an appropriate label?*

Answer:

The Darts Hill Labeling Team.



While new labels have been slowly appearing at Darts Hill Garden over the past couple of years, you may have noticed our professional-looking labels popping up on plants around the garden at a much faster rate recently - a result of the efforts of the Labeling Team. Although not one member of the team claims to have all of the above skills, abilities, and experience - together we've got them covered. That's why this team has been so productive since it came together as an informal group in April 2017.

The group meets every Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon to work on the tasks it takes to inventory and label a Darts Hill plant.

The process for producing a label goes as follows:

The plant is identified. This is the most important step, assisted by old inventories, old labels, and the research and plant identification skills of our team members and sometimes outside experts.

Identified plants are entered into an Excel Spreadsheet. At this step, the plants are researched to ascertain correct botanical and common name, family, and nativity.

The Excel Spreadsheet is merged with a Word template, producing a file of labels as they will appear almost in their final form.

The label file is e-mailed to Douglas Justice, Associate Director, Horticulture and Collections at UBC Botanical Garden, for final editing. Douglas ensures that all of the information on the label is correct and current. (More on Douglas's AMAZING contribution to follow.)



Nancy Oike, in the shack, organising spreadsheets vs. printed labels



Many of these older style labels have gone missing. As we identify plants and create new labels, the old labels are being replaced.



New & improved label

Douglas's label edits are entered onto the original spreadsheet, and the edited spreadsheet is added to the master label file. (The information also becomes part of the Darts Hill Garden Park Plant Inventory.)

The edited label file is converted to a CorelDraw file. At this step, final formatting is done and the Darts Hill logo is added.

With the CorelDraw file as the source, labels are finally produced on our Trotec Laser Engraver.

The labels are placed in the garden on the appropriate plant.

It usually takes a minimum of two to three weeks and considerable coordination to label a full bed of Darts Hill plants because different skills and team members are engaged at each step in the process. But each team member feels a sense of satisfaction upon seeing the final result - a well-labeled bed that is professional in appearance and of the highest standard of botanical nomenclature.

We can't thank Douglas Justice enough for his contribution to high standards of the Darts Hill inventory and labeling. We are fortunate that he has been willing to be our guide, teacher and editor. Four years ago, when the labeling project began, Douglas provided advice and arranged a field trip to UBC for interested Darts Hill members to observe the UBC labeling process, make contacts with key personnel, and use the label templates already in use at UBC.

When we were ready to start our own production, Douglas volunteered to edit our labels - and he has steadfastly continued to do so. He ensures that they are accurate and reflect the most recent research on changing Family, Genus, and Species Names (taxonomy).

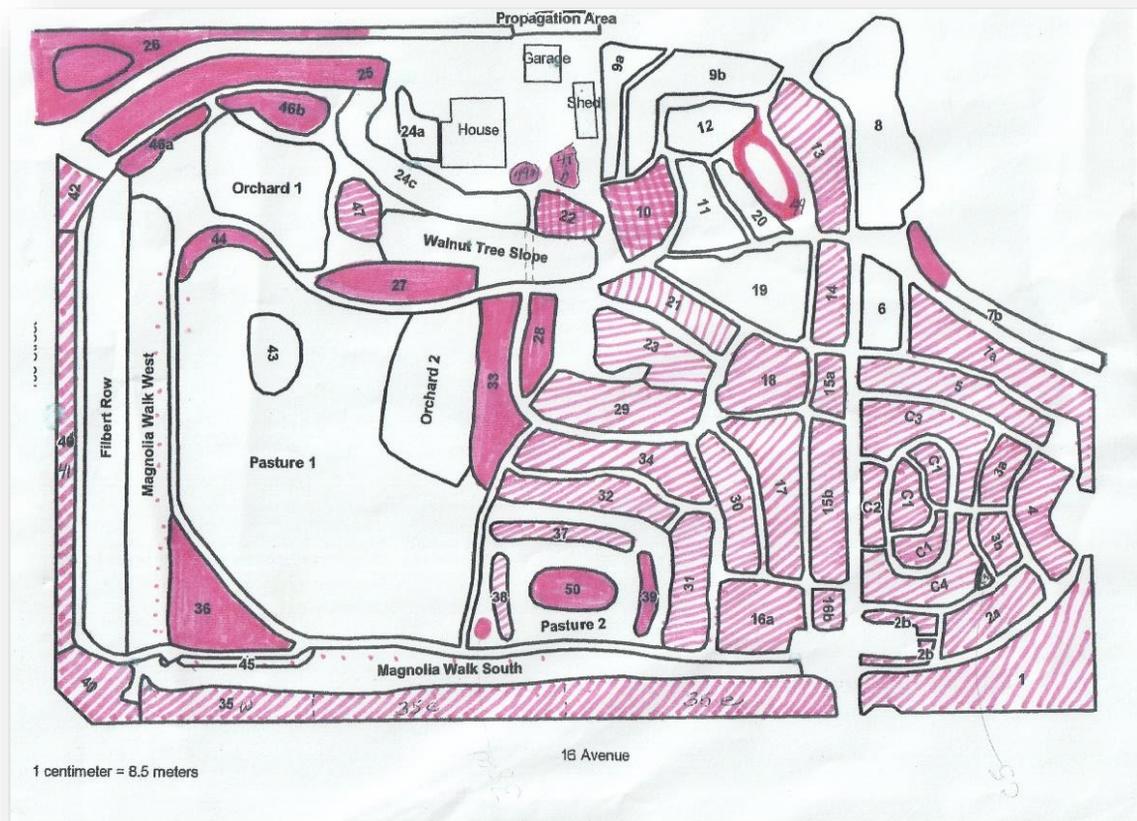
It's not uncommon for a set of labels to be edited and returned by Douglas within an hour or two. This past spring, Douglas was in Vietnam for an extended period, sometimes away from computer access; but he still managed to send back an edited set of labels within a day or two. In June, a set of his edited labels came back from Kathmandu, and a week later, from Tibet.

We appreciate the encouragement and support our team receives from City of Surrey personnel who do everything they can to ensure we have what we need before we need it. Parks Operations Coordinator, Maria Fish, has even been known to work alongside us when her time permits.

The map below shows the progress of our labeling efforts to the end of July. Solid pink represents beds that are fully inventoried and labeled; pink cross-hatch represents beds that are partially inventoried. It is hoped that the entire garden can be fully inventoried by the end of 2019. After that, there will be an ongoing review. A process is also underway to ensure the most efficient method of continuously updating the inventory as plants are added, moved, or decommissioned. At time of publication, we have an inventory of 1900 labeled plants.

Please consider joining our intrepid team: Pam Yokome, Sharon Lawson, Celeste Paley, Jim Cadwaladr, Willa Downing, Nancy Oike, Kathy Piccott, Sue Klapwijk, John Sprung, Anne Sprung, Maria Fish, and Sanne Dryborough. It's enjoyable and a great learning experience.

Contact us at info@dartshill.ca.



- As found, transcribed and provided by Nancy Armstrong

NEWLYWEDS, or Nearly

The 1930s-1940s was the hey day of street photographers who took photos of individuals, couples, or even larger groups as they walked down the streets. Photographers would offer a numbered ticket to the subject(s) and an invitation to stop by the office and buy a copy of the picture.

In Vancouver in the 1940s there were at least four of these companies. This smartly dressed, briskly walking couple are Edwin Darts and Francisca Koster going about their business. As they both worked downtown, Edwin as a bookkeeper and Francisca as a stenographer, perhaps they were on their lunch break?



We can't know why they were there, but from looking at other photos in the archives I found one from a few feet farther up the street which identifies the location as "taken in the 600 block of West Hastings". We do know they were photographed 25 April 1942 when they were 38 and 26. This is almost exactly one month before their marriage 28 June 1942. The name of the photographer is also unknown, as this company had several photographers; however, the back of the card states:

Enlargements of this Photo
can be had at
KANDID KAMERA SNAPS
612 W. Hastings St. Vancouver, B.C.

Kandid Kamera Snaps was a fairly new company when this photo was taken, but stayed in business from 1941-1955.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER - Jane Robinson, Hospitality

I think we can look back on the Summer of '17 as a successful one for Darts Hill Garden. After the wild winter, the weather has become warmer and drier each month which makes a stroll through the garden much more attractive to visitors. I suspect the plants and trees, however, would welcome a good downpour.

Beginning in April, Sunday openings were added to the schedule for the first time. These, along with the existing Saturday openings, continued through the end of June and partially in July and will return for the month of September. This gives people more flexibility when planning a visit. Many have taken advantage of this and the attendance on both days is comparable and probably more, dependent on the weather or the offer of a plant sale, than on which day of the weekend it is. Recently, we also seem to be welcoming several people visiting from other countries. They either come with friends and family or have researched gardens to visit while on their trip.

This year, Darts Hill Garden has been the location for two of Surrey's Sounds of Summer concerts and a Partners in Parks Volunteers Appreciation event. All of these help to introduce the garden to the public.

There is a little bit of Darts Hill Garden you can visit any day of the week and that is the plant bed in Heron Park at Crescent Beach. It is on the left just over the railway tracks on your way to the beach. One of our members designed the layout and all the plants are from Darts Hill Garden. Volunteers helped with the original planting and continue to maintain the bed weekly throughout the year. Some plants, when they get big enough to split up or produce seedlings, even return to Darts Hill to be potted up for the plant sales.

The Hospitality Group, that welcomes visitors to the Garden, has gained several new volunteers this year. Many newly signed DHGCTS members have chosen to join the Group and I am very grateful to them for helping me fill my schedule of shifts each month. We look forward to greeting you coming in and watching you leave relaxed and smiling. Enjoy your visits for the rest of 2017.

WIFI

Installation of the wifi for members' use in and around the propagation area should be completed by the end of August.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

**MEMBERS' DAY
& PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, SEPT. 16**

**OPEN HOUSE & PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, SEPT. 23**

**MEMBERS' DAY
SUNDAY OCT 15**

**OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY OCT 21**

**MEMBERS' DAY
SUNDAY NOV 19**

**WEEKEND STROLLS
EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY
IN SEPTEMBER**

**ALL OPEN TIMES ARE
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Cryptomeria japonica - Japanese cryptomeria or Japanese sugi

Provided by Blake Willson, The Tree Library guy - Website: <https://TreeLib.ca>

Japanese cryptomeria or Japanese sugi (*Cryptomeria japonica*), the national tree of Japan, is one of the most prolific species at Darts Hill Garden, with 9 cultivars found in various locations.

Cryptomeria leaves are awl-like, slender up to 1.5 cm long, taper-pointed and curved forward along the shoots, resembling the leaves of **giant sequoia** (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), although the sequoia grows much larger and also has bigger cones.

The Sekkan-Sugi cultivar (bed #15) has creamy yellow tips, while Cristata or crested sugi has crest-like needle structures. The 'Elegans' cultivar (bed mbu) has been bred to retain juvenile characteristics as an adult tree.

Cryptomeria japonica 'Araucarioides' (bed #2) is often called whip-cord cryptomeria for its narrow branches and sparse twigs, quite an unusual site. 'Spiralis' (bed #2) is a slow-growing semi-dwarf that can grow up to 10 m tall over 40 years. Needles twist spirally around the branches in ringlets.

To view many interesting photos of many varieties Japanese cryptomeria, follow the link to The Tree Library at: http://treelib.ca/species/cryptomeria_japonica.

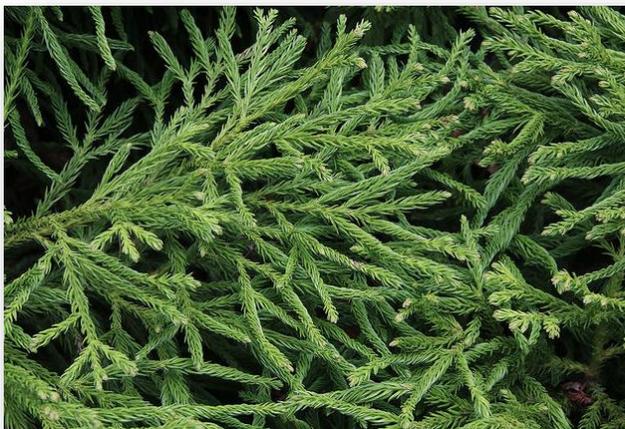
Blake Willson – Dendrologist



Cryptomeria japonica 'Cristata'



Cryptomeria japonica 'Elegans'



Cryptomeria japonica 'Spiralis'



Cryptomeria japonica 'Araucarioides' group

PLANT TREE OF THE SEASON, provided by Jacqueline Hohmann

Oxydendron arboreum – Common name: Sourwood

A lovely tree waits for you in beds 9 and 40 at Darts Hill Garden. Known as 'sourwood' for its sour-tasting leaves, *Oxydendron arboreum* is small and yet very ornamental, having almost iridescent leaves in spring which colour into glorious shades of yellow, red and maroon by mid fall. Indigenous to the eastern United States, it might achieve 15 meters and more in its native Appalachian Mountains, but is usually much smaller when grown in our northern latitude.



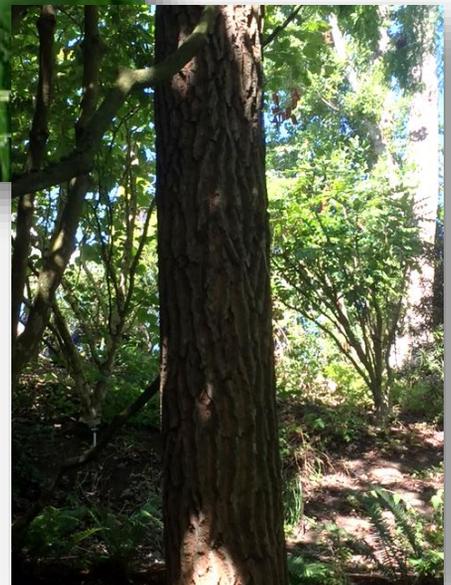
In her knowledgeable compendium of trees of the South Fraser Region, 'Our Sylvan Heritage', Susan Murray offers this description of the sourwood bloom: "The flowers are produced in late July into early September. They are small, white and fragrant, resembling the flowers of blueberries or heather plants. The flowers are produced in clusters of racemes up to 25 cm long, each drooping raceme gracefully upturned at its tip". Hill Garden visit.

Even the uninitiated may easily recognize these delicate, urn-shaped flowers as the same you would see on blueberry, and also the ubiquitous *Pieris* shrubs used so commonly in our area, because blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), *Pieris* and *Oxydendron* all belong to the same plant family known as Ericaceae. Like *Pieris*, which is sometimes called the 'lily of the valley' shrub, *Oxydendron* is also known as the 'lily of the valley' tree. Note that Ericaceae family plants share not only the same urn-shaped flowers, but also their preference for rich, acidic soil and an intolerance of drought.

With fall arriving, you will certainly want to include *Oxydendron arboreum* on your next Darts Hill Garden visit.



Oxydendron arboreum in Bed 9 is very tall and full of blooms



GENERAL MAINTENANCE:

It was beautiful to watch the garden slowly come alive this last spring and it was quickly followed by summer this year. When I saw the *Acanthus spinosus* blooming, along the main walk into the garden, I knew that summer had arrived. During the volunteer event we had a few people stop to take a closer look at the Acanthus in wonder of its unusual flower.

It was a very good growing season this spring. The pruning work kept the staff busy into August, when we traditionally start our projects. We're trying not to let it slow us down and work is underway to get the garden ready for the September openings.

Our summer staff member, Brenda Strobl, will be returning to her studies this September. We wish her well with all her future endeavours.

EVENTS AND STROLLS:

A very big thank you to our Partners in Parks Staff and Society Volunteers for all the work they did to make the summer events at the garden such a success. The garden hosted two Sounds of Summer events, the Plein Air Event and the Parks Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. All of the events brought in people who had never been to the garden. Many are planning to come back after seeing what a treasure it is. Our weekend strolls continue to bring in good numbers, averaging just over 100 people per day. We are finding that weather plays a huge part in how many people come. The smoke which plagued the Lower Mainland this summer did not do us any favours either.



Photos by N. Oike/J. Sprung



We will be open again on the September long weekend for our weekend strolls. For the September 23rd Open House we are planning an apple themed event in celebration of the gleaning of the orchards. We will have staff from the Honey Bee Centre on hand to answer questions about the new bee hive. We are working to develop other community partnerships for this event.

NEW ADDITIONS

The Collections Committee has been busy through out the summer. Recommendations have been made for the newly proposed Trillium and Lady Slipper collections. Orders have been placed and we will keep you updated as to their delivery and planting this fall.

THE HONEY BEE CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

You may have noticed some work being carried out on the north property, just above the propagation area. We are clearing the brush to make space for a Bee Hive which will be managed by the Honey Bee Centre. Installation of the Bee Hive will be moving forward at the end of August. Members brought forward the suggestion to have a hive as a potential talking point during tours. We will be working to install a bee and butterfly garden around the hive so as to provide habitat to native bees as well.



BED 4 STONE WALL

We have started refurbishing work on the small stone wall in Bed 4. We will be reducing the wall to the south and extending it to the north. This will provide the opportunity to reroute the path between Beds 4 and 5. By doing this we will no longer have to worry about people hitting their heads on the branches of *Ulmus x hollandica* 'Jacqueline Hillier' in Bed 5. The area under the *Thuja plicata* has been tidied up as well.



BENCHES

As mentioned in Susan Murray's report, four new benches have been installed in the garden. Planting will be done this fall in behind the benches in Bed 43. It is planned that the *Sciadopitys verticillata*, or Japanese umbrella-pine in Bed 46a will be transplanted into Bed 43 along with the planting of a *Pinus pinea*, a Stone pine, from the nursery, and potentially another conifer, yet to be decided. Thank you to the Society for working with us on this project and for the donation of the Stone Pine. Further refinement of these area will be done this fall.



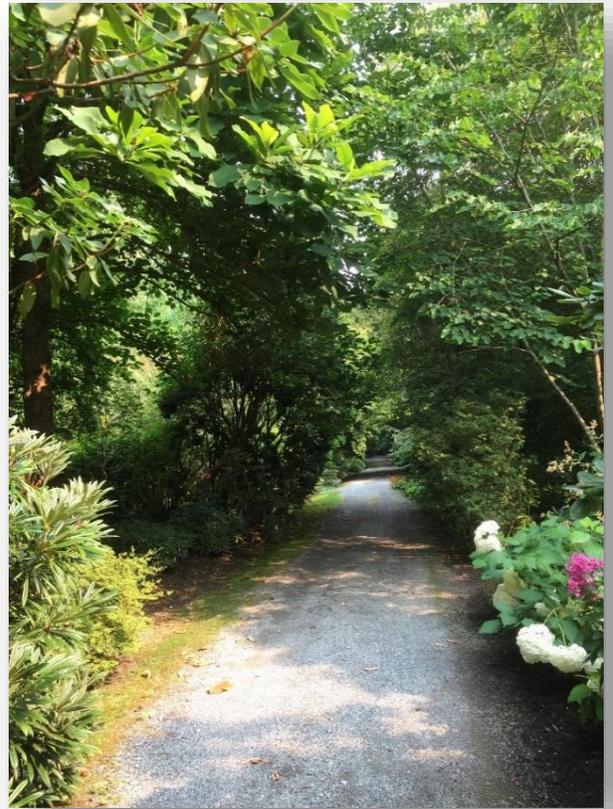
Sciadopitys verticillata in Bed 46A

THEN AND NOW

photos from G. Laine's historic collection
and by K. Piccott



Francisca Darts and Gus on the Tractor Road,
circa 2002



Same location - August 2017

GARDEN COLOURS

Photos by S. Murray



Zantedeschia 'Picasso'



Chelone lyonii 'Tiny Tortuga'



Cornus kousa 'Rosabella' - seedling



Platycodon grandiflorus 'Astra Blue'



x Chitalpa tashkentensis 'Pink Dawn'



Eucryphia glutinosa 'Flore Pleno'
Found in Bed 21 – August 1/17
Photo: N. Oike



Calycanthus occidentalis



Kalmia latifolia 'Ostbo Red'



Magnolia asheii

Photos by S. Murray

Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society is an organization working in partnership with the City of Surrey to ensure the preservation of Darts Hill Garden Park.



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