

THE ORACLE

A Newsletter from the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR: SUSAN MURRAY

Visitor numbers to Darts Hill Garden Park in 2019 increased to well over 8,000 as a result of the combined efforts of DHGCTS volunteers and the City of Surrey Parks staff (Ken Warren and crew) and Partners in Parks staff (Stacey Rosa and crew). Thanks to everyone, it was a great year of fun activities, educational opportunities and outstanding events in the garden.

I am happy to report that several city initiatives that were identified in the annual Capital Planning process undertaken jointly by the DHGCTS Board and the City last November were completed. Four benches were added to the garden in 2019 (with more to come in 2020). A very attractive but substantial security fence and gate along 168th was completed in August. A new power line was installed to Darts House due to the failure of the old power pole adjacent to the garage. Drainage upgrades and other projects are in the works and will be completed in the coming months and in the spring of 2020.

"A Secret Garden: The Story of the Darts Hill Garden Park" was successfully published, with many thanks to author, Margaret Cadwaladr. The July 31 Book Launch was a great success. If you were unable to attend the Book Launch, copies of "A Secret Garden: the Story of Darts Hill Garden Park" are available for sale online for \$29.95 at www.dartshill.ca. They will be available for sale at our upcoming AGM as well.

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In November, the DHGCTS Board submitted an application for a third grant from the City of Surrey Cultural Grants Program for 2020. Successful applicants will be announced sometime in early January. If successful again, the \$5,000 grant will assist with the ongoing marketing of the book.

The City of Surrey, with significant input from the DHGCTS, began a Master Planning Process for Darts Hill Garden Park in August. The last Master Plan was developed in 2009. Thanks to those DHGCTS members who completed the online survey in September. The general membership will have an opportunity to view the new Master Plan at the DHGCTS Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Saturday March, 7, 2020 in the Church Hall next to the garden. Doors open at 9:30 am with a meeting beginning at 10:00 am, and yes, a light lunch will be served as in previous years. Please mark this date on your calendars.

DHGCTS volunteer Rosina Cuk has developed a very interesting program of educational activities for 2020. We can look forward to workshops about Kokedama, Moss Hanging Baskets, Flower Portraiture, Forest Bathing and Christmas Wreath Making next December.

2019 Christmas wreath making: there may still be space in DHGCTS 2019 wreath making workshops. For more info contact wreath-at-DartsHill.eventbrite.com or info@dartshill.ca.

The DHGCTS is always looking for volunteers. Please consider donating some of your time in 2020 to ensure the Darts legacy carries on in perpetuity at Darts Hill Garden Park.

NOTICE OF AGM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE: MARCH 7, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

Place: Emmanuel Evangelical Covenant Church

17029 - 16th Avenue (across from the Darts Hill Garden main parking lot)

Susan Murray, Chair of the DHGCTS will be our 2020 AGM speaker. In September of 2019, Susan toured the South-West Botanical Province of Western Australia. She will share with us her wonderful photographs of some of the rare and unusual plants endemic to the area. The South-West Botanical Province contains an excess of 6,000 vascular plants. 80% of these wild and wonderful beauties are endemic only to this region of the world. Come and be enchanted by tiny donkey orchids, amazed by the stately royal hakea and flabbergasted by the huge variety of Banksia species.

Renew your Membership or become a member to the DHGCT Society for the nominal annual fee of \$20.00 to enjoy a lively meeting with a light lunch plus an afternoon enjoying Darts Hill Garden Park. The garden will be open until 3:00 pm.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

provided by Rosina Cuk

Our 2020 workshop schedule is out! Detailed workshop information will be available at our AGM. Registration begins in January. Visit www.dartshill.ca for further information.

FLOWER PORTRAIT WORKSHOP Lead by Scarlet Black April 26, 2020

Come join Scarlet Black for a day of flower portrait photography, a workshop at Darts Hill. This will strengthen your connection with the flower and make details about your subject more apparent.

Photos: Scarlet Black



MOSS HANGING BASKET May 2, 2020

In this hands-on planting experience, you will create a 12-inch hanging moss basket filled with a variety of annuals. We will help you customize your plant choices for optimal performance in full sun, shade, or a combination of sun and shade.



KOKEDAMA WORKSHOP March 23, 2020



Come and discover this dynamic, free style and fun technique of creating a Kokedama and make one with your own hands! You will learn what a Kokedama is (moss ball), how to make it, soil composition, best plants to make a kokedama with and wrapping techniques.

FOREST BATHING July 25, 2020



Ken Ouendag, a Certified Forest Therapy Guide will lead a 3-hour walk based on the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing, through Darts Hill Garden Park.

Photo taken from K. Ouendag website



December 7 & 8, 2019

11am - 2pm

Explore your creativity using a mix of foliage from Darts Hill Garden Park to create your own unique Christmas wreath with Sharon Lawson.

The workshop includes some foliage from the garden with festive refreshments. Participants must bring secateurs or sharp scissors and a pair of gloves. Bring your own wreath making supplies or purchase from the workshop. See website for more details. Space limited to 8 per session.

Place Darts Hill Garden Park Maple Activity Center 1633 170 Street Surrey

Fee \$20 General Admission \$10 DHGCTS Members with valid ID

12" wreath making kit available for an additional \$15 or bring your own supplies.

More info wreath-at-DartsHill.eventbrite.com info@dartshill.ca





FRASER VALLEY WOOD TURNERS



Photo taking by Ken Warren

On November 18, 2019, Keith Ruttan of KC's Woodcraft presented the DHGCTS with a wonderful gift. Mr. Ruttan and several other members of the Fraser Valley Wood Turners Guild, received trunk rounds of the Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*) which failed July 30, 2018 in Darts Hill Garden Park.

Mr. Rutan, an expert crafter, created a beautiful piece of functional art in the form of a massive bowl which was received on behalf of the Society by Chair Susan Murray. Next time you are in Darts House, take a look at this fine work of art.

First, a basic shape was created by Mr. Ruttan using the coring method. After 8 months of air drying time the rough piece was then precisely turned to make the bowl. Fourteen coats of finishing material were applied and sanded down to almost nothing each time to achieve the final silky smooth finish.

Keith Ruttan can be reached at jkl1944@gmail.com for more information about wood turning and the Fraser Valley Wood Turners Guild.

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

As a member of the BCCGC, the Darts Hill Society has access to this club's quarterly newsletter. Click on the link to read October 2019 issue:

Articles Include:

- Climate Change Impacts
- Japanese Beetle update
- Workshops
- Vendors
- Scholarship Trust Fund
- Floral Design







UPCOMING SCHEDULE

MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday, January 12, 11pm - 3pm

Members are most welcome to drop by the house for tea or coffee and browse through Francisca's library. Or you might wish to join the guided tour beginning at 11:30 am in the meet-and-greet area.

MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday, February 9, 11pm - 3pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, March 7, 10pm - 1pm

MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday, April 19, 11pm - 3pm

GET GROWING: OPEN HOUSE & PLANT SALE

Saturday, April 25, 11pm - 3pm

Enjoy music and treats in the garden! A guided tour begins at 11:30 in the meetand-greet area. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions. As we come to the end of another successful year at Darts Hill Garden, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the group of DHGCTS volunteers on the Hospitality team who have joined me at the Welcome Table to greet all those who visited the Garden on Members' Days in 2019. I got to meet a lot of new faces this year along with the faithful long-timers and very much enjoyed all your company, even though I must apologize for not always remembering your names when I see you.

I would also like to thank everyone who made a trip to the Garden on the open days throughout 2019. Approximately 8,400 visits were recorded this year which may have surpassed all previous annual totals. I hope you all enjoyed your experience and that we will see you again next year when the Garden opens to the general public in April. Be sure to spread the word to your family and friends who have not yet heard about Darts Hill Garden.....and circle those plant sale dates on your calendar!

Francisca and Edwin Darts left a beautiful legacy of plantings inside the walls of their Garden. Additions or replacements are made each year with selections made by the DHGCTS Collections Committee and nurtured by the Surrey Parks gardening team.

However, while at the Welcome Table on Members' Day in October, I became aware of a few additions around me that had introduced themselves to the Garden without anyone ever having planted them there. There had been no discussion or permission given about being included. There were three completely different species within this small area. *MUSHROOMS!!*

I took some photos and, on returning home, I innocently turned to the internet to attempt identification. Then, as with all things 'internet', it evolved into several hours of exploring the enormous and fascinating world of Mycology (science of fungi) and the realization that you can't judge a mushroom by its cap alone. You have to inspect the topside, under-side and inside as well as colour, shape, size and location, just to be in the ballpark.

Probably because they seem to be a law unto themselves, an amazing amount of folklore grew up around mushrooms throughout the ages. Many superstitions seem to center on so-called fairy rings being associated with evil spirits, sorcerers and witches and dealt with the dire consequences of entering these rings. I prefer the more benign beliefs that they were a place where fairies came to dance and the caps of the mushrooms were where they sat to rest afterwards. There was also a children's version that mushrooms were fairy umbrellas left on the forest floor when they returned to their underworld at dawn.

Then there is the culinary angle. This comes with a dire warning of its own as it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of toxic and non-toxic varieties before introducing foraged mushrooms to the dinner menu.

There is, of course, a wealth of information to delve into about fungi, their myriad forms and association with plant life. I hope I have whetted your appetites to continue the search yourselves if you are not already experts. I will include a few websites here that got me excited to learn more during my preliminary searches.

https://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/whistler/twenty-fascinating-facts-about-fungi/Content?oid=2646932

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/champignons-mushrooms/English/index2.html

https://www.mushroom-appreciation.com/types-of-mushrooms.html#sthash.kZRlfoXj.dpbs

https://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/mycorrhizae.asp.html

I look forward to seeing many of you at the DHGCTS Annual General Meeting on Saturday, March 7, 2020. Bring cash or a cheque to renew your membership, or attend and become a member at the meeting.

I extend my very best wishes to you all for the upcoming Christmas season and for all the holidays being celebrated in the coming month.

See you in the New Year. Jane Robinson













"When a Tree Falls in the Forest . . . " The Making of a Garry Oak Meadow

Article by Nancy Oike

At Darts Hill Garden Park, when a tree falls in the forest it creates an opportunity for an exciting new

project.

In the winter of 2018/2019, a large Empress Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) on the northern edge of the main walkway into the garden blew down in a violent windstorm. Falling toward the northwest, it took out several trees and shrubs, leaving a large swath of mostly bare land in a conspicuous part of the native area. Over the spring and summer, the bare area quickly became re-populated with trailing blackberries (*Rubus ursinis*), salmonberries (*Rubus spectabilis*), and dogwoods (*Cornus stolonifera*).

The volunteers of the Native Plant Group saw this area as an opportunity to introduce a Garry Oak Meadow to the garden. The area had all the necessary environmental attributes - a sunny, well-drained, south facing slope and lots of existing, successfully-growing plants typical of the Garry Oak ecosystem:



Ken Warren, Site Preparation

Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*), Tall Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), and wildflowers such as Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Common Camas (*Camassia quamash*), and Few-Flowered Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*).

What exactly is a Garry Oak Meadow? It's an open forest dominated by Garry Oaks (*Quercus garryana*) with a few additional tree species such as Douglas Fir and Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) - all carpeted underneath by meadows of wildflowers. Garry Oak Meadows are among the rarest ecosystems in Canada. On Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, they still exist, but over a small area. In the lower Fraser Valley, where they once thrived in limited areas, they're all but extinct. In the past, they were managed by First Nations, who cultivated the wildflowers as a food source and regularly burned the herbaceous plants to keep down invasives. The demise of this ecosystem can be attributed to loss or fragmentation of habitat, mainly due to development, and to overgrowth of non-native invasive species after the practice of burning ceased.

By creating a Garry Oak Meadow at Darts Hill, we can help to preserve this special ecosystem, share its beauty and diversity, and educate our visitors on the history and importance of its preservation.

After receiving support and approval from the City of Surrey Urban Forestry Department, which manages most of the Darts Hill Native area, the Native Plant volunteers set to work. At a September work party, the area was cleared of the recent re-growth. Plants were then ordered. On a damp October morning, Ken Warren, Darts Hill's ever-helpful Head Garden Technician brought down his Kubota to dig out remaining stubborn shrubs and stumps, artistically arrange three large logs to enhance the area, and deposit sand and gravel for soil amendments.

The following day a work party convened in the rain to plant over 200 native trees, shrubs, and perennials (listed below) in the newly-prepared area.

Many thanks to the volunteers from Darts Hill Native Plant Group, Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society, A Rocha Canada, local high schools, and the Canucks Autism Program; to the City Urban Forestry Department for providing the plants; to Ken Warren for his help, encouragement, and support throughout; and especially to Margaret Cuthbert for her leadership, planning, expertise, hands-on work, and provision of cookies and hot coffee on rainy work days.



Planting the Meadow

Now all that's left is the waiting. The Meadow will come alive in the spring and summer. Look for it as you stroll up the main walkway toward the meet and greet area, and take some time to enjoy the diversity and beauty of its native plants.

(Native Plant volunteers meet several times throughout the year. New members are always welcome: contact info@Dartshill.ca).

Plant List:

Quercus garryana (Garry Oak), Arbutus menziesii (Arbutus), Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Coastal Kinninnick), Camassia quamash (Common Camas), Aquilegia formosa (Red Columbine), Dodecatheon hendersonii (Shooting Star), Campanula rotundifolia (Harebell), Brodiaea coronaria (Harvest Brodiaea), Allium acuminatum (Hooker's Onion), Allium cernuum (Nodding Onion), Brodiaea hyacinthina (Fool's Onion), Olsynium douglasii (Blue-Eyed Grass), Eriophyllum lanatum (Woolly Sunflower), Achillea millefolium (Yarrow), Fragaria vesca (Woodland Strawberry).



Camassia quamash



Dodecatheon pulchellum



Photos: Nancy Oike

REPORT

FROM THE LABELING AND INVENTORY GROUP NOVEMBER 2019

By Nancy Oike

Photo: N. Oike

The labeling and Inventory Group finished up the year with a self-congratulatory brunch and planning meeting . . . congratulatory, because we've finished up the first run-through of the historic garden, placing labels in every one of the beds on the 3,300 plants that we've been able to identify so far.

This has been a huge but incredibly satisfying job for our small group, consisting of (pictured below, left to right) John Sprung, Nancy Oike, Anne Sprung, Sharon Lawson, Celeste Paley, Pam Yokome, Kathy Piccott, Willa Downing, and (missing from the photo) Marilyn Lung.

Special thanks to the Board's Educational Representative, Douglas Justice, for ensuring high standards of accuracy by reviewing and editing all inventory entries and labels. The work of the group is also greatly assisted by the City garden technicians, who meticulously record plant deaths, moves, and new acquisitions.



Most of this work has been done over a three-year period. As we enter the next phase of our work, our plans include ongoing cleaning, replacing, and upkeep of the labels; expanding the inventory by continuing with plant identification; creating new labels; and improving and streamlining our procedures.

The Labeling and Inventory Group is constantly looking for expert assistance with plant identification in specific plant groups. If you can contribute with one-time or ongoing plant i.d., we'd be happy to hear from you. Please contact Nancy at info@dartshill.ca.



AMAZING PLANTS OF DARTS HILL

photos taken by Susan Murray

Autumn 2019



Nyssa sylvatica - Black Tupelo

Submitted by Jacqueline Hohmann, Master Gardener and volunteer guide.

A splendor in the garden this fall was the tall and elegant tree known as *Nyssa sylvatica* or black tupelo. If you had the opportunity to walk anywhere near Bed 33 you would have been remiss not to notice it there, poised in its lovely adornment of fall colour. Glossy leaves, once bright green in summer were now displayed in vibrant shades of scarlet and maroon. Such a beautiful tree to behold in autumn!



Nyssa is a genus of only a handful of species that are native to woodlands and swamps in eastern North America and East Asia. Common names include black gum and sour gum, in addition to black tupelo, or just tupelo. It is deciduous and produces only insignificant flowers followed by small edible cherry-like fruits.

In youth, Nyssa grows conically and then, as it develops maturity, it rounds and spreads its crown, reaching heights of up to 20 metres in its native habitats.

This is not a common tree in our South Fraser Region, so we are really fortunate to have such an outstanding specimen of Nyssa sylvatica in Darts Hill Garden.

This will be Jacqueline's last submission as she is moving out of the lower mainland. We thank her for all her contributions and wish her well as she moves on.

PLANTS OF DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK FROM AROUND THE WORLD China and Tibet



Chaenomeles cathayensis - chinese flowering quince, is a species of flowering plant in the rosaceae family. Native to China, Bhutan, and Burma.

C. cathayensis Is a vigorous, upright deciduous shrub or small tree with spiny shoots and lance-shaped leaves up to 12cm long. Pink-flushed white flowers, 4cm across, are borne in small clusters in spring, followed by yellow-green fruit up to 15cm long. www.rhs.org.uk



Zanthoxylum simulans - prickly ash

Z. simulans is a bushy, spiny, medium to large deciduous shrub or small tree. The ash-like leaves are up to 8cm long with up to 11 broad leaflets. Flattopped sprays of small, yellow-green flowers are produced in early summer, followed by open clusters of small, red fruits that split open to reveal black seeds. Leaves, bark and fruit are all aromatic. Native to e. China, Taiwan www.rhs.org.uk

Rhododendron triflorum – three flowered rhododendron, native to e Nepal to se Tibet

Three-Flowered Rhododendron is an evergreen or semi-deciduous shrub 1-5 m tall, with cinnamon colored flaking bark. Growth habit of this shrub is open and upright, with beautiful, distinctive, smooth, peeling, dark red bark. Lance shaped leaves to 3" long are medium green and hairless on top; the reverse has a waxy bluish-green cast and is densely covered with very small scales. Flowers to 1.5" long are widely funnel-shaped, pale lemony-yellow, spotted-green or yellow-tinged pink, in trusses of 2.4. Three-Flowered Rhododendron is found in the Himalayas, from E Nepal to SE Tibet, at altitudes of 2400-3300 m. Flowering: April-May



Photo: Chris Klapwijk www.rhododendron.org

Source: Greer's Guidebook to available Rhododendrons

CITY OPERATIONS

as provided by Ken Warren

Visitor Attendance

We are very pleased that 8515 visitors have come to the garden as of mid-November. This brings us very close to our projected increase in visitorship for 2019. We anticipate additional numbers by the end of the year with Members' day and wreath workshops still to come. We have consistently seen an increase of 2000 visitors per year over the past 3 years. We also note that many of the visitors to the garden continue to be first time or new neighbourhood visitors. Thank you to everyone for all the hard work and encouraging friends and family to come to the garden.

Volunteers have contributed 1287 hours to committees, tours and other projects in the garden. Needless to say, this dedication is what makes Darts Hill such a spectacular place to visit!

Maple Meadow improvements

We continue to work on wildflower plantings in the Maple Meadow to benefit our bees and pollinators. The mason bee and honeybees have been removed for the season and we will see them back in Spring of 2020. We have begun installation of stones, logs and a bench in the Bee Garden expansion. Please check out the new single seat log bench in this area, that was made by our 'bench master', Scott Hampel.

Our crews continue to plant the Maple Meadow frontage to help screen views of the surrounding housing developments. Selections of new specimens as well as plants relocated from the heritage garden will be used to enhance this frontage.

New developments to the Neighbourhood Community Plan (NCP) and Darts Hill Master Plan may see changes to the Maple Meadow property. We will keep you updated as information becomes available.

General Maintenance

General maintenance schedules have continued over these past months with some exceptions as noted below. Staff have been working hard to ensure that these new plantings are maintained. We are thankful that autumn weather has given sufficient rain to maintain the collections. We are thankful that November has been so mild and has allowed us to continue with garden clean up and planting preparations. We are continuing to plan for bed expansions and new plantings into the fall 2019 and spring of 2020.



Photo: K. Piccot

Power Pole Failure and Hydro reconnection

The failure of the power pole closest to the garage on Sept 2, 2019 has burdened our time and financial resources. It took a substantial amount of our time to re-establish and maintain power to the house. Preparations for the reconnection of services was challenging. Essential service is now resolved.

We were faced with numerous challenges over the course of this project. The hydro line coming up the driveway could not simply be reconnected to a pole, as it is currently. Hydro clearance regulations restrict lines running too close to trees. The best option given the sensitivity of the plant material was to bring power into the house via the Maple Meadow property.

Power and telecommunications services were sent underground from the approximate location of the fallen power pole. This was done to meet current electrical code. As result, the entrance from Maple Meadow to the house has been widened and we were able to add additional conduit for future expansion in the Maple Meadow.

Picnic Tables, Benches, Railings and Artist's donation

We have not seen very much use of the new picnic tables (by the Maple Activity Centre). We hope everyone will encourage friends and visitors to spend the day, have a picnic lunch, relax and enjoy the garden. I would be interested to know how often the picnic tables are actually being used and whether we need to budget for more tables in the future.

We have installed new benches in 2019. Areas around these new benches have been improved and we hope everyone takes time to sit at these and enjoy the views. Proposed bench locations for 2020 are being discussed.

The installation of the railing that leads from the house to the heritage walnut was postponed as access to the house parking area was restricted due to the power pole issue. We will be in contact with the contractor over the upcoming months to finalize installation details.

We are very thankful for the Art donation of 2 Cedrus table-bird baths by 'Understory' Artist Markus Macdonald. These two pieces will be installed over the winter months, placement has been decided in collaboration with Society members.

Fruit Trees

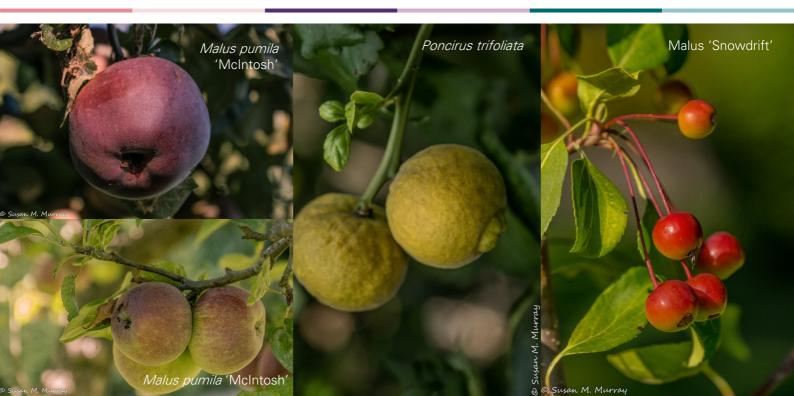
The recently planted Crab apples from Derry's Orchard and Nursery are generally doing well despite the occasional visits and scraping by deer. We will need to surround these trees with 6' deer fencing until they are mature. These fruit trees will enhance our current collections and help to emphasize food sustainability in the community.

We are working with fruit industry experts and garden inventory records to identify fruit trees in the collection.

We continue to struggle in acquiring the desired specimens for the Nut Orchard and had some set backs in the development of this collection. Seeds of the *Gevuina avellana* (Chilean Hazelnut) have been distributed to various propagators around the Lower Mainland in hopes of growing successful seedlings.

Rhododendron Collection

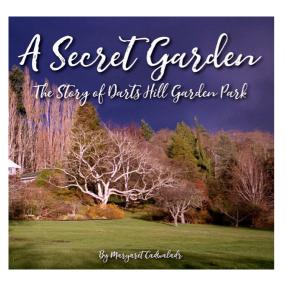
The numerous additions to the Rhododendron collection are doing well in their new locations. We look forward to seeing these young plants develop into the fine specimens that we expect them to be. We will continue with fall and spring planting of the remaining plants in our nursery holding area.





This hand-written note by Francisca Darts was amongst items that Nancy Armstrong found in archival documents held by the City of Surrey.

THE STORY OF DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK



The book traces the lives of Ed and Francisca Darts who transformed their rough, stump-covered acreage into an acclaimed garden containing rare and unusual shrubs and trees, many grown from seed. Francisca became one of the most knowledgeable garden experts in western Canada in the era of "super plantswomen."

The book is also the history of the gardening community in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia during her era.

To purchase your copy, visit dartshill.ca/secret-garden/

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.

CONTACT:

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