

The Darts Hill 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.

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WHAT'S BLOOMING AT DARTS HILL?

By Doug Justice: Chair of Darts Hill Garden Society, Curator of Collections & Research Scientist, UBC Botanical Garden

Visitors to Darts Hill with an eye for the unusual will no doubt appreciate *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, the North American buttonbush. It is a large, sprawling deciduous shrub or small tree native to swamps and streamsides from the Maritimes south to Florida and west to California. In summer *Cephalanthus* produces large clusters of 3cm (1¼") diameter heads, each composed of numerous tiny white flowers with long exerted

The spherical heads are borne on wiry stalks from the tips and upper axils of the branches, and the whole effect is rather like hundreds of tiny, hazy pincushions. After flowering, the heads turn brown, not unattractively so.

Once the fruits are ripe, they shatter easily and are probably taken by small animals.

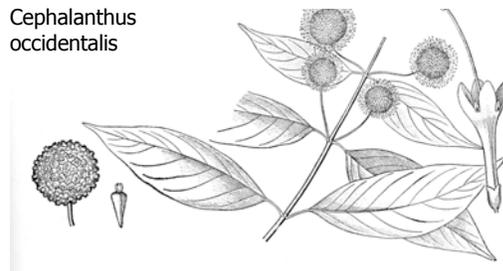
My own first encounter with this species was frustrating. Without its distinctive globular flowers, the shrub is reminiscent of *Calycanthus* (spice bush)—oppositely arranged, shiny, ovate-lanceolate leaves on strong slender stems.

Unlike spicebush, however, it is without an aroma of any kind (the flowers and crushed leaves of *Calycanthus* species are characteristic that way).

Because it is rarely planted in the northwest (anyway, that's my excuse), I had no idea what to make of it. I now know better.

Francisca (Mrs. Darts) planted a specimen at Darts Hill some 20 years ago and this plant has grown to epic proportions—more than 3m (10 feet) feet high and across—with its feet happily in soggy soil. Buttonbush is another great reason to visit Darts Hill. See you there!

Cephalanthus occidentalis



"In the garden, Autumn is indeed the crowning glory of the year, bringing us the fruition of months of thought and care and toil. And at no season, save perhaps in Daffodil time, do we get such superb colour effects as from August to November."

-----Rose G. Kingsley, The Autumn Garden, 1905

AUTUMN INTEREST

By Graham Laine: *Francisca's*
Assistant at the Garden

It has been a beautiful summer at Darts Hill, and while a few plants suffered from some degree of drought stress; with careful watering and the very reliable well as a backup irrigation supply, the garden came through the hot summer months very well.

The pond plants have flourished in the warm conditions and now that the water level is down it's time to get in there and clear most of it out. The fish and other pond creatures will benefit from more open water next year. Close by the pond, in bed #11, the scent of the turning leaves of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* is already evident. In the same bed, the colorful fruit and seeds of *Euonymus yedoensis* are striking. At the east end of bed #5 is the very attractive *Pseudolarix amabilis* (Golden Larch) and this year it has many cones at the top. Other deciduous conifers in the garden include the Swamp Cypress ~ *Taxodium distichum* by the pond, the Dawn Redwood ~ *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, various other Larches, and the young *Glyptostrobus lineatus* by the big rock below the house.

In the south-east corner at the top end of bed #1 the bark of the slow growing *Quercus suber* (Cork Oak) is worth a look. Also close by in bed #4b is the interesting variegated foliage of *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Tricolor'. While there, look up into the canopy of *Cercidiphyllum magnificum*, another of the *Katsura* trees in the garden.

At the east end of bed #29 the large red fruits of *Cornus kousa* 'Milky Way' are shaping up and are an impressive sight if the birds leave them alone. In the center bark mulch beds are many hardy Fuchsias giving great colour through the late summer. Other plants to look for in the center garden are the late yellow flowering tree broom *Genista aetnensis*. Also in bed #34, enjoy the fragrant white flower clusters of the large shrub *Heptacodium jasminoides*, and below this, the pink flowers of *Hibiscus moscheutos* the common Rose Mallow. In the same area, by the gravel walk in bed #32, don't miss the beautiful flowers and foliage of *Hydrangea villosa*.

The perennial bed #37 in the lower field has been a riot of colour all summer. At the west end the huge seed head of the lily *Cardiocrinum giganteum* stands 2 metres tall. Close by is the brilliant Dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff' and a little further to the east look for the pale cream yellow ground-level flowers of the Ginger plant *Zingiber mioga*.

Unusual and Rare Trees of Darts Hill Garden Park

By Susan M. Murray © 2003.
Part 1 of 7

Darts Hill Garden Park is home to a vast array of unusual and rare trees. A brief description and location of a few are included below. For a more comprehensive discussion of the trees in Darts Hill Garden Park check out *Our Sylvan Heritage, A Guide to the Magnificent Trees of the South Fraser*, 2003, by Susan M. Murray.

Abies homolepis – Garden Bed 1 Nikko Fir

Growing to fifteen metres, Nikko Fir is native to the mountains of Japan. Large specimens of this fir are very rare in the South Fraser Region. The needles are dark glossy green above. There are two strong white bands of stomata on the underside of the needles. The large upright cones ripen to a dark purple brown. The bark is pinkish gray or purplish gray, breaking into small flakes.

Acer buergerianum – Garden Bed 8 Trident Maple

Growing six to nine metres high in its native habitat in China and Korea, Trident Maple is rare in the South Fraser Region. The 8 cm long three-lobed glossy ivy-like leaves are dark green above and blue green beneath. The leaves turn dark red or sometimes orange in the fall. This maple produces upright racemes of pale yellow flowers.

Acer cissifolium - Magnolia Walk and Pasture. Vineleaf Maple or Trefoil Maple

The Vineleaf Maple, native to Japan, grows ten metres high and ten metres wide with a horizontal oval to round form. The yellow-green catkin-like flowers are produced just as the leaves appear in late April. The pale green leaves are trifoliate. They open a lovely bronze, become dark green and then turn brilliant shades of red in the early autumn.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

By Marlene Gurvich: Membership Coordinator, Darts Hill Garden Society; Garden Time – Shaw TV

Well it's been just over a year that Darts Hill Garden has been open to members. Many of us have taken advantage of the member visits to enjoy the beauty of Francisca's Eden. I have been visiting Darts Hill for many years and I still marvel and learn from this exceptional garden.

Autumn is one of the most colourful and sensational seasons in the garden. With the dry weather we've been experiencing colour that has been forced a little earlier than normal.



Katsura Tree

Trees to watch for include *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (Katsura), *Stewartia*, *Oxydendrum arboreum*, *Parrotia persica*, *Liquidambar styraciflua* (Sweet Gum), *Sorbus* and of course - the many varieties of *Acer*.

Shrubs to watch for include *Euonymus alatus* and numerous varieties of *Viburnum* (many exhibiting colourful berries). *Euonymus europaeus* has unearthly looking berries of orange and pink. Grasses are full figured and prominent in many of the beds.



Schizostylis coccinea.

There are some very nice clumps of *Schizostylis coccinea*. Commonly called the Kaffir lily, *Schizostylis* is a rhizome with narrow, grass-like leaves. It's pronounced skiz-os-til-is and is derived from the Greek work *schizo* 'to cut' and *stylos* meaning 'deeply divided'. Showy spikes of crimson, coral or deep pink flowers bloom on sharp stems. The flowers resemble a refined gladiolus.

We look forward to seeing you out at the garden on one of the upcoming Member days:

Sunday September 20,
11 am to 3pm

Sunday October 19,
11 am to 3pm

Sunday November 16.



Euonymus alatus

For most of you, **renewal** of your membership will be due in December. We'll be mailing out more information shortly.

Come on out and enjoy a crisp Fall day at Darts Hill Garden!



Berries from *Euonymus europaeus*
Spindleberry Tree

We certainly encourage our members to visit the garden on the Member days. Use your guest passes and entice others to join Darts Hill Garden Park Society. If you can spare some extra time and would like to help out on our Members Days, please call Marlene at 604.535.1302 or e-mail gurvichs@shaw.ca

ACER (A'cer)

DESCRIPTION: These are hardy, ornamental trees that vary in height. The dwarf, Japanese Maples are only 2-3 feet high and some of the North American kinds may grow 100 or more feet. These trees are natives of various parts of Europe, North America and Asia. The word *acer*, is the Latin name for Maple. The Maples that are commonly grown are deciduous (leaf losing) and most are hardy in the North. Most Maples have clusters of small, greenish-white or yellow flowers; in some kinds, they are reddish or reddish-purple. Many are pretty when in bloom in early spring before the leaves uncurl, though they aren't grown for their flowers.

A. rubrum and *A. Opalus* have flowers that are followed by winged fruits called "keys", which help in the scattering of seeds by the wind. When thrown up in the air, they descend spiraling, resembling miniature helicopters. The fruits and seeds of most kinds aren't showy, but some, such as *A. pseudoplatanus* *Erythrocarpum* (the scarlet-fruited Sycamore Maple) are. These trees are grown mainly for their beautiful foliage. The lobed leaves of some kinds are most beautiful in the spring, some from spring through autumn and some radiate in the fall when they change colors to brilliant yellows, reds and golds. A few Maples have colorful markings on the trunks and larger branches that are most noticeable in the winter when the trees are without leaves.

PROPAGATION: Seeds can be sown when they're ripe in the fall in a sheltered location outside, or in a cold frame. This is the best method of acquiring new trees. Next to this is the practice of layering the branches that can easily be bent down and pegged into the ground in the summer or they may be air-layered. Grafting may be done in March or budding in July. Seedlings of one of the common kinds are used as stocks.

VARIETIES: F = flowers L = leaves

American Maples - *A. macrophyllum* (Oregon Maple), up to 100 ft., F. yellow, fragrant, L. 1 ft. or more across turning bright orange in fall; *A. negundo* (the Box Elder), 50 ft., L. pinnate w/ 3 or more leaflets; *A. pensylvanicum* (Moosewood), sm. tree, L. lg., light green turn yellow, twigs & branches are light green striped w/ white; *A. rubrum* (Red, Scarlet or Swamp Maple), F. red & red seeds, L. bright green turn to red & yellow shades, its variety is *A. rubrum* Columnare; *A. saccharinum* (Silver or White Maple), L. deep lobed, silvery beneath turn yellow, its variety is *pyramidale*; *A. saccharinum* Laciniatum (Wiers Maple), L. much divided on pendulous branches; *A. saccharum* (Sugar or Rock Maple), L. turn to red, orange & yellow shades; *A. saccharum* Monumentale (Sentry Maple); *A. spicatum* (Mountain Maple), F. narrow spikes followed by bright red seeds, L. turn orange & scarlet.

Exotic Maples - *A. buergerianum* (Trident Maple) L. 3 lobed; *A. campestre* (Hedge Maple), 50 ft., slightly corky branchlets; *A. davidii*, 50 ft., L. turn yellow & purple; *A. ginnala* (Amur Maple), L. turn orange & crimson; *A. griseum* (Paperbark Maple), cinnamon-brown, flaky bark; *A. nikoense*, 40 ft., L. turns to scarlet; *A. platanoides* (Norway Maple), F. greenish-yellow, its varieties Schwedleri, L. open red & change to dark green, Crimson King, L. rich purplish-red, Columnare, Globosum, Cucullatum (Eagle Claw Maple); *A. pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore Maple) and its variety *erythrocarpum*; *A. tataricum* (Tatarian Maple), L. bright green turn yellow.

Japanese Maples - *These are forms of A. palmatum and A. japonicum* - *atropurpureum*, deep purple; *aureum*, yellow; *dissectum*, green, finely cut leaves; *ornatum*, deep red, finely cut; *roseomarginatum*, deeply cut leaves edged w/ pink; *rubrum*, lg. leaves, red when young change to almost green; *A. japonicum*, leaves have seven or more lobes & are bright green turning to crimson; *Aconitifolium* (Fernleaf Maple), deeply divided, green leaves turn ruby red.

For questions on accuracy, please visit www.botany.com

Special thanks to the authors, and to Doug Justice, James Good and Kathy Piccott for their help in putting this newsletter together.

