

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

Changes at Darts Hill Garden Park

By Graham Laine

There have been a couple of changes happening in the garden this Fall.

The big change is the pathway between the retaining walls below the driveway and Bed #25. This grass path was in poor condition and at times slippery at either end. The steps at the east end are gone and the slope will be graded with a crusher gravel surface to make the entire path a safer and more accessible walk. The grass area below the path will be graded up to the top of the wall eliminating the drop-off. The overhanging shrubs along the bottom of bed #25 have been cut back and in some cases moved to other sites.



The path that is being renovated below bed#25.

Also, the battle has begun to get rid of the Bamboo Grass that has been spreading at the west end of the bed.

Another change to look for - Bed #36 - the Vinca bed in the southwest corner - is too difficult and time consuming to keep weeded and tidy. For this reason it is being renovated to a bark mulch surface.



This photo above indicates a blend of the heritage Walnut tree, the Silver Pendula Birch, Sweet Chestnut, and in the foreground, *Glyptostrobus pensilis*, Chinese Swamp Cypress.

Below, the Witches Broom on our large White Pine gets ever bigger and we must take some cuttings to propagate the Dwarf foliage before it's 1/2 inch support branch breaks and it falls.



Strategic Planning Update

Susan M. Murray, Chair

I would like to update the members of the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society about the Strategic Planning process begun by the Board of Directors of the Society in June of this year. Following ample discussion this fall, the following organizational structure was created to enable the committee work of the Society to be accomplished more effectively. All committees would fall under the umbrella of a 'Friends' as below:

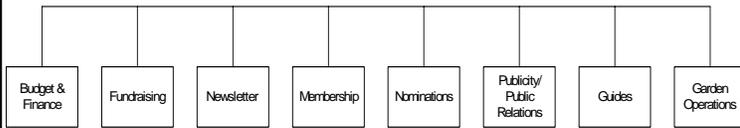
Committees being established and their purposes include:

- 1) Budget/Finance
 - To manage the financial affairs of the Society.
- 2) Fundraising/Endowment
 - To raise operating funds
- 3) Newsletter
 - To prepare the Oracle for publication
- 4) Membership
 - To increase and maintain Society membership
- 5) Nominations
 - To recruit Board members
- 6) Publicity/Public Relations
 - To increase garden profile to the horticultural community
- 7) Guides
 - To provide tours of the garden
- 8) Garden Operations
 - To direct operations of volunteers

Darts Hill Garden Society



FRIENDS



Comments and suggestions for this newsletter can be sent to Kathy Piccott at 604-501-5068 or by email to: kmpiccott@city.surrey.bc.ca

Member days are the third Sunday of the month - see you at the Garden, January 16th, 2005.

The Directors would like to wish all members of the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society best wishes over the holiday season and peace and good health in 2005.



A very nice yellow variegation developed this year from a bud mutation on a mature Juniperus virginiana 'Grey Owl' which is on the south side of the driveway to the house. Another candidate for cuttings.

Notice is given of the Annual General Meeting – March 1st, 2005

Location: South Surrey Arena, 2199 - 148th Street, second floor meeting room, enter from west side, lower level and take the stairs up.

Please note: amendments to the Society's bylaws will be presented for approval.

Proposed Bylaw amendments:

- 2.6 Dues: Each member shall annually pay the membership dues set by the board. Notice of such dues will be sent annually to each member no later than September 30 and paid on or before December 31st.
- 4.4 Quorum: A quorum at the general meeting is the greater of one-quarter of the members or three persons
- 5.4 Composition of the Board: The Board shall consist of a maximum of ten (10) persons as follows:
 - a) Six (6) directors elected by the membership
 - b) One (1) director appointed by the City of Surrey
 - c) One (1) director appointed by invitation by the board from the South Surrey Garden Club
 - d) One (1) director appointed by either of Kwantlen University College or University of British Columbia
 - e) One (1) director appointed by the Guides of Darts Hill Garden

What is a volunteer?

Some members keep their organization strong
While others join, just to belong.
Some volunteer and do their share,
While others lie back and just don't care.
On meeting days, some always show,
While there are those who never go.
Some always pay their dues ahead,
Some get behind for months instead.
Some do their best,
Some build, some make,
Some never do, just sit and take.
Some lag behind, some let things go,
And never help their organization grow.
Some drag, some pull,
Some don't, some do-



Filberts in winter

Consider- which of these are you?

(*Swiss Herald*, Fall 2004, p.29)

Like me, each of you are probably members of a number of organizations. We join for various reasons: for professional development, social ties, recreation and fun, and for our families; to support a child's soccer team or gymnastics club for example. Most of us end each week with a time deficit because work and family obligations pull us in all directions. So how can we accommodate our responsibility to be an active volunteer in the organizations, clubs and groups that we have chosen to join? It is difficult, no doubt about it. I certainly can't give my all to each and every organization that I belong to. It would be too much. Unrealistic. So what can we do as individuals?

Do something, no matter how small, to help the garden grow... truly become a Friend of Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society. Pay your membership dues for 2005 right now. Encourage a friend, relative or colleague to join too. Post a copy of the *Oracle* in your workplace. Visit the website and share it with a friend. Attend the Annual General meeting on March 1 and be part of the decision-making that will guide the Board of the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust in the coming year. Say, "Yes, I'd like to help out on the Fundraising, Newsletter, Membership, Publicity/Public relations or Garden Operations committees". Better yet, take a leading role and chair a committee, assemble a few like-minded folk and get the ball rolling. Join the Guides of Darts Hill and offer your time to conduct tours. Be a gatekeeper. Join the speakers' list and prepare a short training session for the Guides. Donate to the Surrey Foundation (ear mark the donation for Darts Hill) and receive an income tax receipt. Are you an enthusiastic birder, or specialist of some kind? Write a paragraph or two for the *Oracle*, such as "Birds, , weeds, insects, wee furry beasts, lichens... of the Garden". Staff the "Welcome to the Garden" table on member open days or one of the two public open days. Nine member days are planned in 2005. An 11am- 3 pm open each Sunday member day, equals 18 volunteer shifts of 2 hours each! Does one of them have your name on it? Please consider doing your bit, however small, to help the garden grow and develop in 2005. Your help is needed and welcomed. Just as a tiny seed has the potential to grow into a massive tree, as exemplified by the Hybrid Walnut to the south of Francisca's residence, the small seemingly insignificant actions of many individuals together have the potential to create great things too.

Contact these volunteers to find out more about:

- Membership: Marlene Gurvich marlene.gurvich@sjrb.ca
- Guides of Darts Hill Garden Park: Mary Dunn dunn_mk@shaw.ca
- Or contact me: susan.murray@telus.net I would be happy to hear your ideas and suggestions.

Susan M. Murray, Chair of the Darts Hill Garden Conservancy Trust Society

BED 44 – “the New Bed”

By Christine Deagle

Guide and Board Member at large

Talking to other guides and frequent visitors at Darts Hill, I discover that I am not the only one to be impressed with the way in which the plants in Francisca’s latest “new” bed have bulked up. This “new” bed, No. 44, is nestled into a curve in the path on the west side and sunny south slope of the garden. Francisca’s vision for this bed was that it should be all perennials, which she could look over when seated on the bench just a little uphill from the bed.

Looking at the lush, healthy growth of the plants in this bed this summer it was difficult to believe that preparation for and planting of the bed was only begun in the spring of 2003, less than 18 months before. I remembered seeing all the little plants when first put in that year, and would not, at that time, have believed they could put on so much growth in only one year. Since I thought this might have resulted from the Herculean task of double-digging and the addition of loads of manure, I asked both Francisca and Graham Laine about the preparation of the bed. I discovered that this was not quite the case.

Graham, when preparing the bed in March of 2003, found that the grass covering the beds was very difficult to remove from the heavy soil below, and left masses of roots behind. So he removed only the grass around the edges of the bed, and covered the rest with a thick layer of newspapers (about six sheets thick, overlapping by about a third – the overlapping was very important, he told me). On top of the newspapers he placed about 6 inches of good garden soil, which contained sand and, he thought, probably some manure. The little perennials were then planted into the bed later that spring. Francisca had visited a nursery friend who suggested several suitable perennials, but her comment to me was that she was surprised by just how many it actually took to fill the bed!

Visiting this “new” bed in November this year, I found that the newspapers had done their job of weed and grass suppression, and had disintegrated and disappeared. I mentioned to Graham that the growth of the new plants seemed phenomenal in such a relatively short time, and he attributed much of it to the moisture retention provided by the layer of newspapers (much of this moisture is provided by run-off from the hill above). He also thought that our hot, sunny summer was a factor, as well as the additional watering from the sprinkler system.

Although of course it was the well past the end of the growing season, I noticed flowers still blooming in November. Unfortunately complete identification of individual plants is going to be a little difficult – the crows have been attracted to the plant labels and either removed them completely or at least picked them up and dropped them next to something else. Those of interest in November included a dahlia with deep burgundy/brown leaves. The flowers are yellow, with a red/orange flush at the base of the petals. Buds open orange, and petals change to yellow as they enlarge. This dahlia had been blooming for at least three months.

One plant that is not a herbaceous perennial is a small low-growing shrub. **Daphne x burkwoodii** “Briggs Moonlight” is planted on the west end of the bed. The pale leaves always make me think that this should be planted in a more shady area, but the recommendation is for full sun. It will be interesting to watch this as it develops.

Francisca pointed out to me a plant she thought was particularly interesting – an artichoke which may be shorter than the norm. Since the crows had somehow missed this label, I was able to identify it as **Cynara scolymus** ‘Violet Globe’.

I can imagine that the tremendous growth of the plants in this bed will continue over the next year, and I am sure many people will be watching with interest, and may be glad to know that a result such as this can be achieved without the huge investment of time and back-breaking effort of double-digging.

"Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity; so that not a snowflake escapes its fashioning hand."

---Henry David Thoreau



SURREY
CITY OF PARKS

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



DARTS HILL
• Garden Park •