

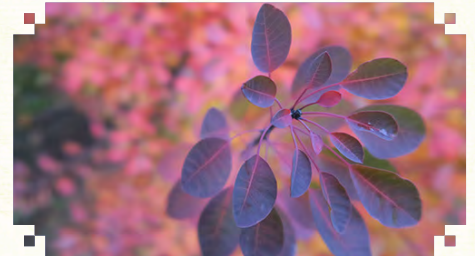
Autumn in the Park

A chill is in the air and the fall show is underway. Although the collection is primarily evergreen conifers, Dominion Brook Park has a beautiful palette of colour unveiled for the fall season.

It's hard to go anywhere this time of year without noticing deciduous trees, especially big leaf maples (*Acer macrophyllum*). These large trees dominate the fall show with the largest leaves of any maple. Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum* & *Acer japonicum*) are also eye catching, with a variety of sizes, forms, textures and colours. Cultivated varieties come in such numerous colours, they are sometimes divided into three categories: hot colours, pastels and deep jewel tones. The emperor oak (*Quercus dentata*) is also generating seasonal interest with beautiful golden-brown leaves. The smoke bushes (*Cotinus coggygria*) are also looking incredible. This fall firework shows the most variety of colour of any fall interest plant in the park. They fade through purplish blue, pink and red before glowing in yellow and orange all within a week or so.

Let's not forget about the cone bearers. Some Japanese cedars (*Cryptomeria japonica*) are transitioning to a splendid purple which they will stay until they change back to green in the spring, never losing their needles. The variegated maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Variegata') displays brilliant yellow leaves with some divided by white variegated bands, adding an interesting twist to an ancient species. The Ginkgo dates back almost 300 million years according to fossil records and although it is not officially coniferous it is much more closely related to conifers than any other grouping of plants. Both the maidenhair tree and the Japanese cedars are unique because they are monotypic and are the only cone bearing trees in the park that change colour with the cooling temperatures making them both worth a closer look.

We all need to rest in our own way. Autumn is a special time for many plants to put on a final show before letting go of the photosynthetic activity and drifting into slumber.



smoke bush (Cotinus coggygria)



maidenhair tree (Ginkgo biloba)



Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum)

Poohsticks

There is a game called Poohsticks, which Winnie the Pooh invented, and which he and his friends used to play on the edge of the Forest. Drop in two sticks on one side of the bridge and then carefully lean over the other side to see which of them comes out first. (adapted from *The House at Pooh Corner* by A.A. Milne). Some young visitors recently discovered that our stone bridge and brook are perfect for Poohsticks. **(If you play, small sticks only please.)**





New Plantings

By the stone bridge, under the cedars, we have introduced a number of native plants. On the slopes on either side of the stream we now have 20 licorice ferns (*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*), 50 sword ferns (*Polystichum minutum*) 20 salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) and some kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos avo-ursi*). We also added kinnikinnick as a ground cover around the new plantings further down the ravine (20 plants altogether).

In addition, we installed a few feature specimens around the Park this fall, including a *Cunninghamia* in the southeast corner, to replace one that was damaged this summer, a *Cryptomeria japonica* *suki* and an oriental spruce (*Picea orientalis*) in the ravine and a dwarf bristle cone pine (*Pinus aristata*) on the north side of the Park, beside the new Mountain Ash.

In total, 114 new plants were planted in the Park.



Winter Dog Walking

For our year-round dog walkers, you will continue to find a garbage bag at the Marshall Road entrance through the winter. One of our newer volunteers, Chris Maier, has agreed to monitor and remove this dog excrement bag over the winter. Thank you Chris!

And thank you dog walkers, for picking up after your dogs and keeping our Park clean.

SCOOP the POOP PLEASE



Another Stone in the Wall

Work continues on our largest project, the restoration of the rhododendron ravine. In recent years we have stabilized the banks, built paths, reclaimed some areas for planting and added stonework.

In October we held our second workshop to teach dry stone building skills and to complete the retaining wall at the head of the Ravine. Many pieces of rock had to be split and shaped. As our President Ian Cameron said of one particularly large stone: "If I carry only one memory of the weekend it will be the ringing of hammer on chisel as almost every member of the crew took a turn." Under the tutelage of stonemason Sandy MacDonald, (of Sandy Stoneworks) a group of "Friends" worked over a weekend. The result is a solid piece of work that should hold up the bank for a long time to come.



2021 Field Work Season

This was a season that presented more challenges than usual for our intrepid volunteers. Our start date for the Wednesday morning work parties was delayed to mid April when COVID restrictions were relaxed. The June heat dome put considerable stress on the plants in the Park. Then a hotter and drier-than-normal summer arrived. Together these conditions had volunteers in the Park spending more time than usual putting water on the beds. We installed our first automatic watering system in a zone with new plants which was most helpful. Overall, we raked less and tackled more blackberries.

We were very happy to welcome nine new volunteers this year.

This may be the result of increased use of the Park due to COVID limitations on indoor socializing. Or perhaps our spot on CHEK TV with the Upside Guys helped bring more people into the Park. We ended the work season with coffee and muffins in the picnic shelter on October 6.

Thank you volunteers, for your time, enthusiasm and hours of work in the Park. This year volunteers contributed a total of 557 hours. We look forward to seeing this capable group again next year to care for the new plantings and maintain the existing gardens.



Feature Plant: Kinnikinnick

Kinnikinnick is an Algonquin word for many different tobacco substitutes and is also commonly used as the name for the plant also known as *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*. Uva-ursi provides us with its other common name: Bearberry.

A plant native to North America, Kinnikinnick is an evergreen shrub with a trailing habit. The leaves are small and leathery. In spring the leaves are yellow-green, in summer they are dark-green and turn reddish-purple in the fall. Blooms appear in early May and June and berries stay on the plant year-round. The berries resemble small apples and contain one large seed. It is a hardy shrub for landscaping in rocky or sandy areas.



Staff this issue: Jody Aylard, Nancy Johnston, Keaton Peddle, Ian Cameron, Dawn Gould