

ARMCHAIR TOUR OF THE PARK

By Ian Cameron

One of the members of the Board of Friends of Dominion Park Society suggested that members (and anyone else who finds this publication) might be interested in reading about the various plants (and perhaps other things) that are mentioned in tours of the park. This is the first in a (possibly endless) series of vignettes.

The tours start at the kiosk on East Saanich Road, with a history of the Centre for Plant Health and the Park, which I assume anyone reading this knows about. We then face north and walk about ten paces to the first two trees, the one on the right being a small conifer.

Cryptomeria japonica

Cryptomeria (literally “hidden parts”) is in the cypress family Cupressaceae. It includes only one species, *Cryptomeria japonica*, also called *Cupressus japonica*, or Japanese cypress. It used to be considered to be endemic (native, and found only) to Japan, where it is known as Sugi, but it grows widely in China as well. The common name in English is Japanese cedar or Japanese redwood. It has been extensively introduced and cultivated for wood production on the Azores, where it covers about one fifth of the land area of the islands.

Cryptomeria is usually a very large evergreen tree, reaching up to 70 m tall and 4 m trunk diameter. The timber is extremely fragrant, weather and insect

resistant, soft, with a low density. The timber is used for staves, tubs, casks, furniture and other indoor applications. It is as easy to saw and machine, and in Japan is favoured for light construction, boxes, veneers and plywood. Wood that has been buried turns dark green and is much valued. The wood is pleasantly scented, reddish-pink in colour, lightweight but strong, waterproof and resistant to decay. It is used in Japan for all types of construction work as well as interior panelling. In India, where it is one of the most widely growing trees, *C. japonica* is called Dhuppi and its light wood is extensively used in house building.

“Wait a minute!” I hear you cry. “You said this is a small tree! You’ve just described a redwood!”

Well, yes. The trick is that there is one cultivar (a variety of a plant species that has been changed by selective breeding) called ‘Elegans’, which is notable for retaining juvenile foliage throughout its life, instead of developing normal adult foliage when it is one year old. It makes a small, shrubby tree 5–10 m tall, which is exactly what we have.

This *Cryptomeria* is not in good condition: the past year has not been kind to it. It doesn’t need a lot of moisture, but it needs some. We will try to find a source so that if and when (probably when) it dies we will be able to replace it. There are other cultivars of *Cryptomeria japonica* in the park, and we’ll run into those later.



Image: *Cryptomeria japonica*



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



Our work season ended in October and we want to thank the loyal group of volunteers who came out each week starting in April and who spent many hours weeding, raking, planting, mulching and watering.

We look forward to seeing you back next year. We will be back to work on Wednesday mornings in March or April (depending on the weather.) New recruits are always welcome. You can get in touch with us by email through our website.

ACTIVITY NEXT DOOR AT THE CENTRE FOR PLANT HEALTH

Construction has begun for a renewal project at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Centre for Plant Health, also known as the Sidney Laboratory, just south of the park. The facility has been the site of important plant health testing and research for more than 110 years. The scientists who work there help protect Canada's plants and the environment from plant viruses, diseases and other pathogens that can devastate berries, tree fruit and grapes. The Centre for Plant Health's use of genetic testing has revolutionized how plant diseases are detected.

The renewal project will build a new greenhouse and header house at the site. State-of-the-art amenities will help current and future generations of scientists advance plant health science in Canada.

Initial work this fall will involve excavation to prepare the ground for foundation work. The construction work and completed facility may be partially visible from some areas in the park, but the facility has been designed to complement the landscape and minimize any obstructions to views. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2025.

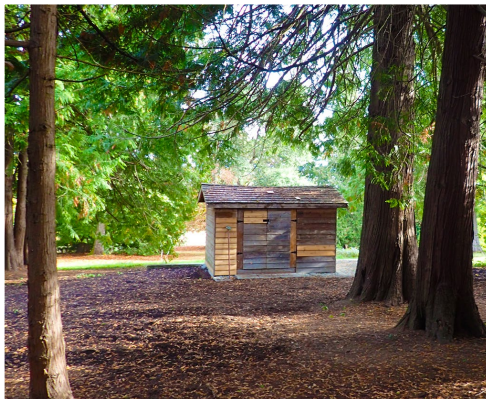
For more information, visit [Renewing the Sidney Centre for Plant Health](https://www.inspection.gc.ca/eng/food-safety-inspection-agency/canadian-food-inspection-agency/canadian-food-inspection-agency-centre-for-plant-health) or contact cfia.CPH-Sidney-CPV.acia@inspection.gc.ca.



GOODBYE TO JIM NELSON

This fall we say farewell and best wishes for a happy retirement to Jim Nelson, Parks Supervisor for the District of North Saanich. Through Jim, the Friends Society had a constructive working relationship with the District. Our volunteers enjoyed excellent collaboration and support from the Parks staff. Part of his legacy will be the new tool shed that was recently installed to replace the collapsing washroom building that we had been using. Thank you, Jim for all that you have done for Dominion Brook Park and for the Parks across the District, you have made an impactful difference.

Jim's replacement on the North Saanich staff is Chad Corbett. He will also take Jim's place on the Board of the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society, as the District's representative.



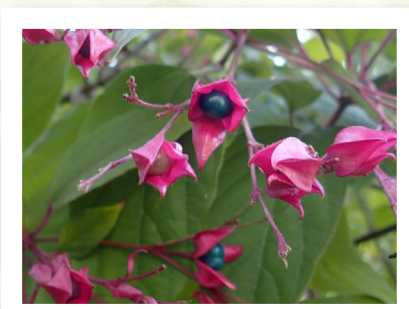
SOME FALL INTEREST IN THE PARK



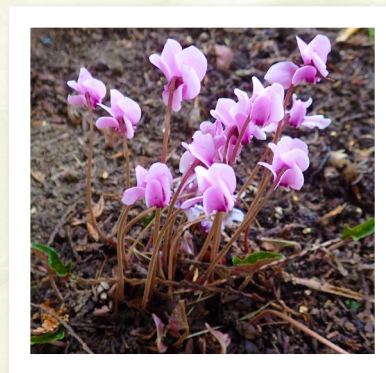
Robinia pseudoacacia 'Frisia'



Hamamelis 'Diane'



Clerodendrum trichotomum



Cyclamen

Don't forget to **SCOOP**
the **POOP** please



Staff this issue: Jody Aylard, Ian Cameron, Dawn Gould