

What's Growing On? The Fletcher Wildlife Garden Newsletter

www.ofnc.ca/fletcher

October - November 2012

Hibernation time at FWG



Frosty morning leaves.

The nursery boxes are covered with leaves, the BYG beds mulched and the storm windows are in place - all signs of the season for putting work to rest until spring. While the weather has been up and down, including some of the warmest days on record, the weather forecast is for a particularly cold winter. If you were considering wildlife projects such as habitat creation or feeding, now would be the time to do your research! Now is also the time to make sure all those accesses to warm and sheltered spaces are blocked up so wildlife doesn't come to stay.

We've had a very successful season, thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who put in countless hours. Between our regular groups, weed bees and external groups doing one-off volunteering, we've accomplished so much! Inside this edition are reports from our main volunteer groups, and from two habitats under active management. Next season we'll start to reach out to high school students looking for hours, so if you know someone who likes getting down and dirty outside be sure to tell them about us!

The newsletter, like our furry friends, goes into hibernation over the snow season. However, the blog knows no seasonal bounds and will continue to post new material every week or so. There is a handy tool where you can sign up for email alerts - perfect for the forgetful among us! The PBase photo blog will also continue to be updated so you can get your FWG fix without leaving the comfort of your home!

If you were thinking about volunteering, or know of friends who might be interested but who are not already in the loop, do take the time to tell them about us. FWG is the work of volunteer effort, and every hand makes a difference!

The gardens are open year-round for visiting, but the Interpretation Centre will not be staffed.

We look forward to seeing you next year, with the spring flowers!



This mouse will have a comfy winter home in an unused nest box!

Contact Us!

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Backyard Garden End of Year Report

text by Isabelle Nicol, photos T Stanton-Kennedy



A tremendous amount of work went into the Backyard Garden this year, and a great deal was accomplished. The beds were well tended and looked after. We received many compliments throughout the season, from “this is my favourite place to be” to “this is a hidden jewel in the middle of the city.” Many thanks were extended to us for the work that is done to maintain the garden from year to year. Therefore, a great big thank you goes to all the volunteers who came out from spring into fall. We truly could not have done it without them.

Again, we had so very many visitors throughout the summer: people walking their dogs, people taking pictures, people with their families, some having picnics on blankets under a shady tree during the hottest part of the summer. A family from Bahrain visited, a wedding party also, artists — in a group or singly — came to create lovely pictures, birdwatchers, people just visiting, sitting and observing all the wildlife that abounds all around us at Fletcher. Overall, despite the drought, it was a very successful year — from the wildlife, flowering plants and people point of view. It was a delight to all who visited us.

In June, the annual Plant Sale was a great success. Again, many volunteers contributed to this annual event — setting up, organizing parking, tending the sales table, helping carry plants to cars, and behind the scenes (seed collecting, helping grow plants throughout winter, tending and watering them, etc.). It can't be said too often, it is thanks to all our wonderful volunteers that it was the tremendous success it was again this year.

A Butterfly Bush provided a pleasant surprise early this summer. We noticed a beautiful plant beginning to bloom earlier in the year but did not recognize it immediately, and were trying to figure out exactly what it was. Then, finally, as its blooms began to attract all the butterflies that were around this year, we realized what it was. Butterfly Bushes had been planted in the past, but never survived winter. What a delightful plant with its large white blooms, and a tremendous attraction to the many butterflies, bees and miscellaneous insects that visited it, as well as the many hummingbirds who came by as well.

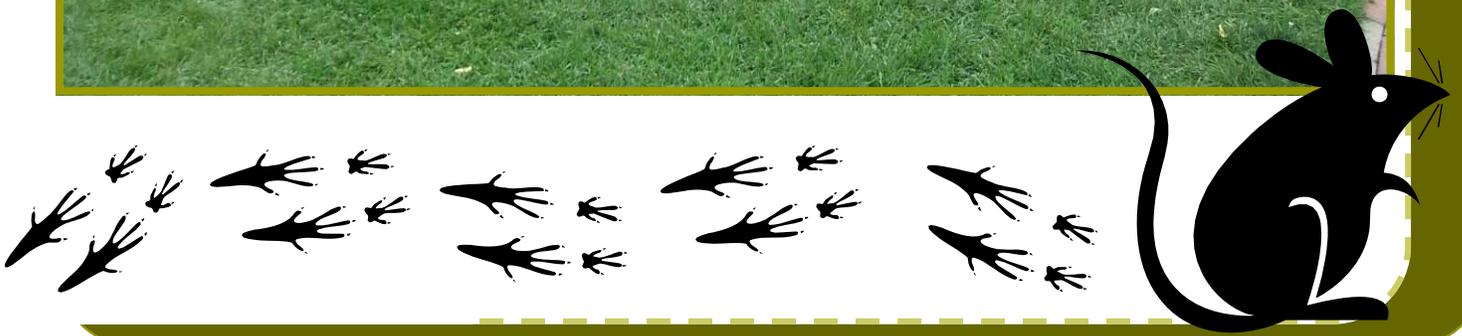
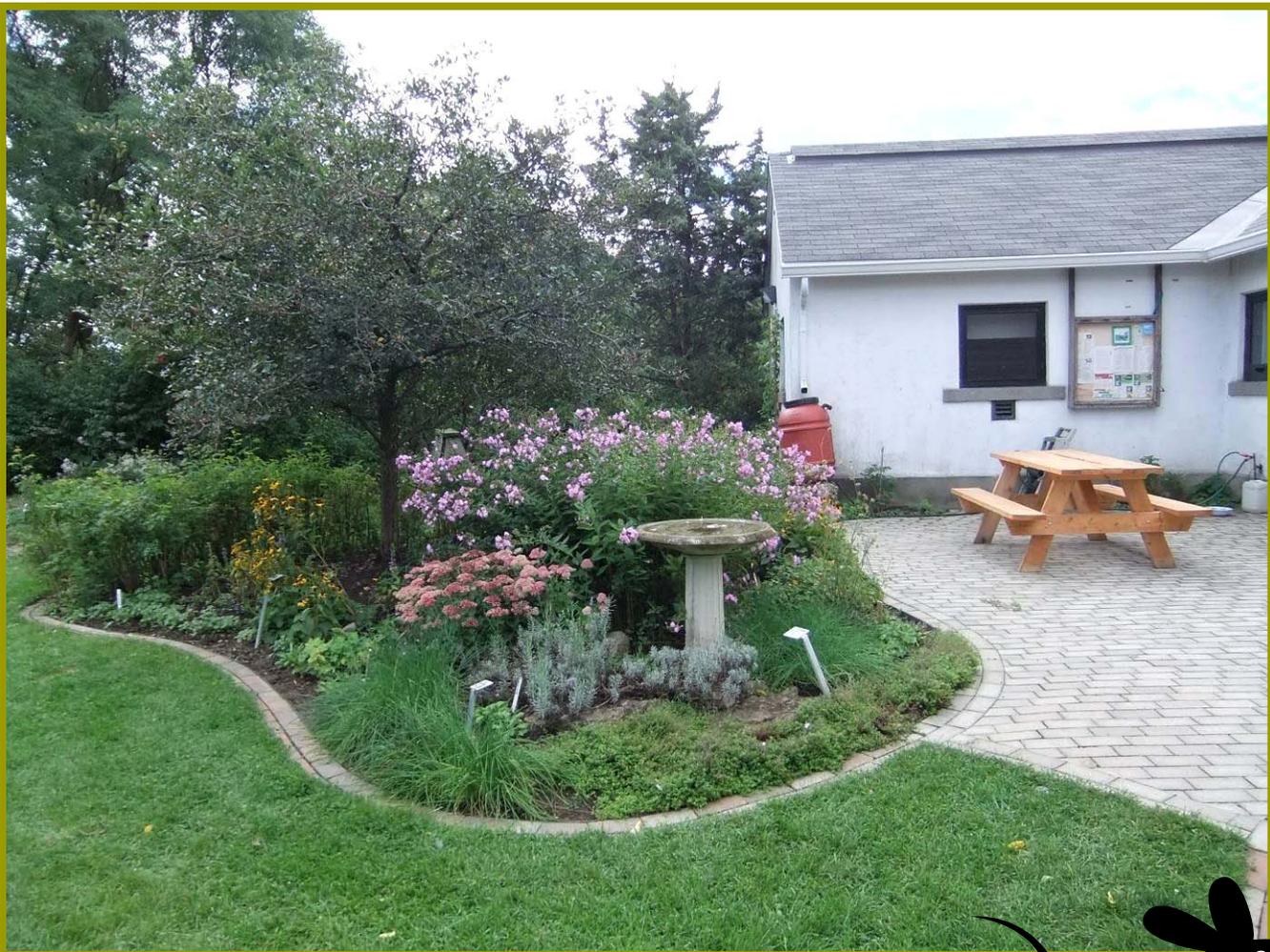
Monarch Butterflies were in great abundance this year and could be seen visiting Joe Pye Weed and many other blooming flowers in the garden, as did Painted and American Ladies, Red Admirals and Black Swallowtails, to mention only a few. Joe Pye Weed is a plant favoured by many insects.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds were in great abundance whizzing their way about the garden, visiting Cardinal Flowers, Great Blue Lobelia, Phlox, Bee Balm, Jewelweed and Bottle Gentian, again to mention only a few of the many flowers in the garden that appeal to them.

We also had the delight of seeing Monarch caterpillars feeding on Butterfly Weed (a plant in the milkweed family) which grew very well and attracted many of the adult Monarch Butterflies to nectar on it as well as lay their eggs. Because of its robust nature this year, it was another delightful addition to the season.

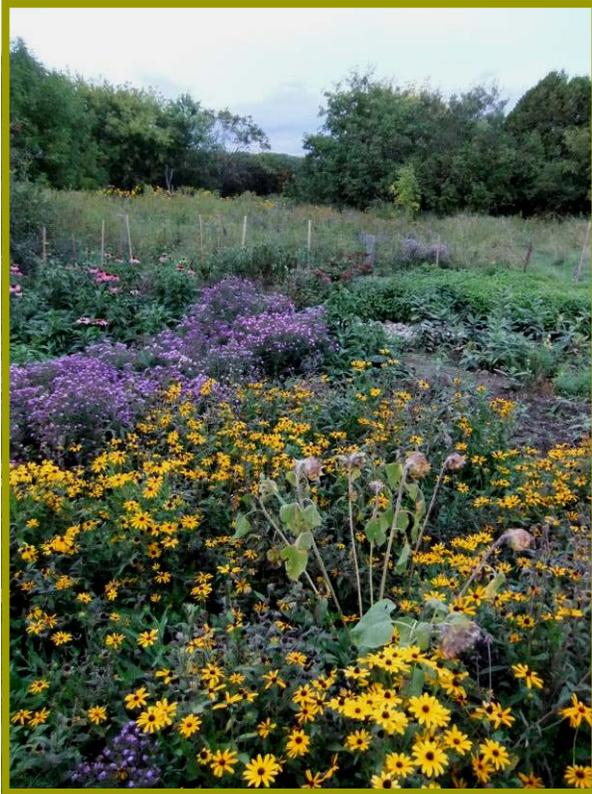
In late September a new "memorial" bench was put in at the lower end of the garden, an especially attractive area from which you can easily view the pond, Plum Tree Garden and Meadow, Butterfly and Woodland beds.

Isabelle is head of the Friday BYG volunteer group and is the BYG Habitat Manager.



Butterfly Meadow End of Year Report

text by Diane Lepage, photos T Stanton-Kennedy



The spring and summer of 2012 were the most productive and successful in my six seasons as the Habitat Manager of the Butterfly Meadow. The major reason is due to the large number of volunteers that came out to help realise the large project that was the central plan for this season. Despite the hot summer with temperatures as high as 42°C, volunteers came as they knew the importance of getting the areas ready to continue planting the rest of the 3000 flowers that had been grown by Budd Gardens. The goals that I had given myself for the Butterfly Meadow have become a reality.

The goals for the season were to create a Model Monarch Waystation, and replace the DSV and goldenrods that were taking over with native plants. The project consisted of digging and then sifting the soil to remove the roots of invasive plants and then plant all the flowers in those three large areas that had been rototilled last fall.

On June 1st, a group of 8 enthusiastic corporate volunteers from Price Waterhouse came to work in the Model Monarch Waystation. They worked all day and despite the fact that it was drizzling during the afternoon. They were busy at digging, sifting and planting so that about 80% of the area was completed on that day.

A planting bee had been organized for Saturday, June 16th and to my delight a group of 20 volunteers came to help out. Some of the volunteers dug up the soil, others sifted and a small number were planting into the second rototilled area. When some of the volunteers had finished they started digging in the third area that was rototilled last year. Some started preparing the area, by digging and piling the soil, while others removed the weeds near the split rail fence, then sifted the soil, removed the roots and planted.

A work bee was organized on Sunday July 15th, with many volunteers coming to help pull Dog-strangling Vine, which made a big difference.

During August, with the help of regular volunteers, we were able to remove a large amount of weeds. Every week we continued to add a small number of plants in the Butterfly Meadow and watered the newly-planted flowers. Two of the volunteers removed some of the dead trees which had fallen down. A number of sumacs and small trees were dug out from the original Butterfly Meadow. Two volunteers removed a fair number of comfrees that had propagated over a large area and we are now replacing them with various native plants. We also put old newspapers and wood chips down around a fruit tree to stop the Dog-strangling Vine (DSV) from climbing up

the branches and also so that we will not need to remove DSV every year from those areas. Two of the men prepared a long trench that will allow us to put in a hose from the water tank to the wet area in the Model Monarch Waystation.

I would like to thank all the volunteers that have contributed in achieving this big project and all the weeding. The wildlife will surely benefit, not to mention the nature lovers. The Butterfly Meadow would not look so beautiful without devoted volunteers.

Diane is the Wednesday volunteer group leader as well as Habitat Manager for the Butterfly Meadow.



TISG End of Year Report

text and photos by Barry Cottam



The Tuesday Invasive Species Group (TISG) is still winding down its second season – we just don't know when to quit! Although final results were similar to last year, this year's group had quite a different experience: the weather worked against us more; the group had higher turnover; and increased awareness of natural restraints, especially bird nesting, made planning trickier. On the plus side, we had a number of group events, with three different student groups as well as the four scheduled work bees. And, quite serendipitously, we were fortunate to have AAFC mow the field south of the Pond on a hot Friday the 13th in July. This put us back on schedule: 45 minutes of mowing spared us work that took three weeks last year.

The weather was a factor from the beginning. We started on May 1, a drizzly day that didn't deter two new volunteers and three of the "regulars." But the rain and heat took a toll, with seven cancellations.

We reached a high point of eight volunteers, four of them new, but three of these dropped out early for health reasons. A fourth returned to college at the end of August. We really missed each of these volunteers, as the TISG was then down to its stalwarts from 2011.

Special groups started on Friday May 4 when Renate brought out 20 high school students from her environmental studies course. About half worked with Tony on buckthorn, the rest on clearing out dead DSV vines in the New Woods near the entrance to the FWG.

This fall, Renate taught an environmental studies course at Carleton University, and made the FWG a focal point. The 30 students spent two Monday evenings transforming the birch grove south of the Butterfly Meadow, clearing out invasives, planting over a dozen new trees, and building wildlife shelters. Another group of 45 students in the Killam Fulbright exchange program came out to work on DSV — a story told elsewhere in this newsletter.





Several research notes are worth mentioning. A rare genetic mutation of DSV with white flowers was collected in early June by an AAFC botanist studying its genetic makeup. A University of Toronto graduate student working on the spread of DSV throughout southern Ontario collected soil and plant samples here; he reported on this research at the Ontario Invasive Plant Council annual meeting in Guelph, which I attended in October, but it will be awhile before final results are available. As well, the FWG is being considered as a test site

for the release in 2013 of a moth species whose larvae feed on DSV. While this is a very interesting development, it will be years before we know if the experiment is a success. Even if it is, we will still have lots of DSV — there is no silver bullet, unfortunately.

The arts community matched the scientific in interest in the FWG this year. Next year's *Ottawa Magazine* will feature a look at the FWG. As well, a Montréal photographer came around to photograph the DSV invasion; some of these photos may be in her exhibit in Laval in 2013.

Now that I look back on it, it's been quite a year. Thanks to all of you, regulars, bee workers and students, who helped make it possible! Invasives present a formidable challenge, but we are making slow but steady progress, in terms of both on-the-ground results and planning based on increasing knowledge and experience. While estimating the amount of DSV removed is no longer possible, this year seems pretty much like last in that regard. It's also interesting to note that the regular group worked an estimated 270 hours while six group events provided about 256. One person working a 7.5 day five days a week would have to work 17 weeks to put in those hours. Clearly, group activities are an important addition to the regular work of the TISG. Both kinds of efforts are essential as we try to deal with the invasive plants marring our 'hidden gem.'

Barry is the new Chair of the FWG Management Committee, taking over from Sandy Garland after so many years. He is also the head of the Tuesday Morning Invasive Species group.



Old Field Habitat End of Year Report

text and photos by C Hanrahan

In October 2011, the northern section of the old field was mowed. By early May this year, goldenrod, raspberries and Virginia Creeper were growing back quickly. However, so were the alien species Dog-strangling Vine (DSV; *Cynanchum rossicum*), as well as lamium (*Lamium* sp.) and hundreds of Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria officinalis*) plants in the northwest corner of the field. Lamium had been dug out several years ago and again last fall, but it grew back thicker than ever this spring. Garlic Mustard has also been removed from that same section over the years. This year, I decided to try rototilling as a way of getting rid of these unwanted species. Thanks to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, this was done in mid-May.

This small, rototilled area was close to the water tank at the Butterfly Meadow, making watering of new plants feasible, so including it as part of the Monarch Waystation project made sense. To this end, Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), Joe-pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) and Lanceleaf Figwort (*Scrophularia lanceolata*) were planted. The Pearly Everlasting came complete with some American Lady caterpillars! The coneflowers did not do well, the milkweed vanished (we hope it has rooted and will reappear in the spring), but everything else thrived, particularly the Common Yarrow and Pearly Everlasting.

As summer progressed, I was interested to see the wide diversity of plants that grew up on the rototilled site. As to be expected, most were non-native and most were annuals. However, scores of the native Evening Primrose also appeared. DSV did as well, but in very small numbers and I continued pulling or digging it out through the season, along with Wild Raspberry. Two species not found at FWG previously also appeared: the native Maple-leaved Goosefoot (*Chenopodium simplex*) and the non-native Giant Foxtail (*Setaria faberi*).

Next year, I have no doubt the composition of this small area will change again. Garlic Mustard and DSV will very likely try to stage a comeback, but whether lamium will remain to be seen. Some of the species present this summer will grow again, but other annuals will quite likely find a niche here too. It is a more varied, diverse site than the rest of the Old Field, which is dominated by goldenrod and raspberry, particularly in the northern half of the site. The southern half has more grass, more asters and a greater variety of goldenrods, as well as a diversity of other flowering plants including Pearly Everlasting, which appeared about 8 years ago (it was not planted). It also has several stands of Stinging Nettles, which hosted dozens of Red Admiral larvae in early summer.

Before the rototilling commenced, I pulled up and bagged every Garlic Mustard plant I could find.

Unfortunately, by early June Garlic Mustard was growing adjacent to the rototilled section, taking advantage of the disturbed soil caused by the tractor using that





section as a turn-around.

Garlic Mustard was also removed from along the service road and under some shrubs in an area of the old field opposite the Ash Woods.

Interestingly, along the path through the middle of the old field, a dense stand of white Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*) grew up where DSV had been routinely cut over a period of at least 6 years. While it looked as if it was suppressing DSV at first, by summer's end it was clear the vine was winning.

Song sparrows and yellow

Mowing. warblers nested in the Old Field area, in shrubs and raspberries, catbirds in the thickets and Tree Swallows in two of the nest boxes.

Christine is the Old Field Habitat Manager, and also performs much of the monitoring work in general of animal and insect species at FWG. She is also responsible for the PBase photoblog galleries.

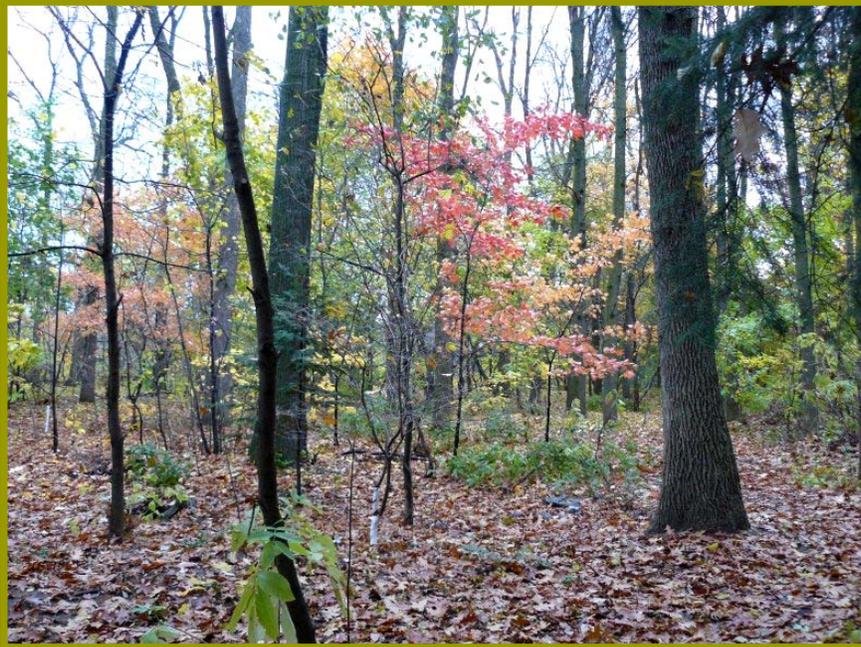
Stay tuned on the blog for a photo post of [A Year in the Old Field.](#)



Regrowth.

Ash Woods Habitat End of Year Report

text and photos by Sandy Garland



Where DID the summer go?! At this time of year, I try to look back over my work log and list of goals and I'm usually surprised to find how much has been accomplished. As I mentioned in the June newsletter, we've started a concerted effort to replace Norway Maples with Sugar Maples. This is going to take many years, but it feels good to have made a start.

New plants — Over this season, we planted almost 30 Sugar Maples — some donated by our good friend Lola Price, others purchased at Ferguson Forest Centre in Kemptville. In addition, we put in several Balsam Firs, a dozen Beaked Hazels, 3 Pin Cherries, and various sedges, ferns, hepatica, yarrow

(south edge) and columbines. A welcome donation of baneberries, bellwort and bloodroots came from Elizabeth Lee, who was also an early supporter of the FWG.

Drought — The drought in July had an impact on the woods, which usually remain cool and damp in summer. The leaves of many pagoda dogwood trees wilted to the point where I thought the trees were dying. Fortunately, they perked up late in the summer when we finally got some rain. Mayapples succumbed early on and, later in the year, far fewer White Snakeroot plants bloomed. The latter is another plant that is susceptible to even slightly dry conditions.

Fern trail — Lis Allison and Joan Darby have been working hard to establish a variety of ferns mixed with wildflowers along a trail that we are dedicating to Bill Cody. They created "bog beds" to keep the ferns damp, and this really paid off during the drought.

New DSV technique — In late August, I noticed that the area where Lis and Joan had been working was virtually free of dog-strangling vine (DSV). I emailed Lis to ask how she had accomplished this miracle and here's what she told me.

"Every week from the beginning of May, Joan and I chopped down any visible DSV shoots. We used sharp hoes and tried to cut them at or below ground level. Each week, the shoots tended to be 4-8" tall, and it was a while before they started to look spindly. At first, I feared that the chopping would lead to *more* stems each time, but that didn't seem to happen. We noticed that if we pulled the shoots, the replacements tended to come back significantly taller than the ones we had hacked with hoes."

We're hoping the DSV stays gone and will be doing a comparison of the fern area with an untouched part of the woods nearby. Another volunteer is trying this same technique on DSV in the ravine.

Crop circles — Another interesting discovery this year was several areas of mostly grass and *no* DSV (see photo). Two of these are just north of the woods; I measured and marked them and will check their size next year. How exciting if a hidden fungus or other organism is combatting DSV for us!



A distinct area clear of DSV. We noted the diameter to see if the circles grow or shrink next year.

Inventory — Counting trees is harder than it sounds, but a Carleton student, who offered to inventory our large trees, sent me looking over the many lists of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers I've planted over the last 20 years.

At first, many alien species arrived, especially with the piles of leaves donated by OFNC members to build up the soil and turn a "lawn" into forest humus. That's where the Norway Maples came from, along with tulips, gourds, roses and even tomatoes! Most didn't last, but the Norway Maples persisted as did buckthorn.

We hesitated to remove them because they were fulfilling the

role of forest understorey - a needed component if we wanted to provide shelter and nesting sites for wildlife. But, slowly, as we learned what native species would be appropriate, we started replacing the aliens.

Red Elderberries seemed to appear from nowhere, with lovely blossoms in spring and red berries that get eaten by birds as fast as they ripen. We planted Striped and Sugar Maples, beeches, Balsam Firs, ironwood (which turned out to be Blue Beech, when I thought I was buying Hop Hornbeam), basswood, oaks and hazel.

Many, many people have helped, both by donating plant material and by planting. Fisher High School students planted the White Pines that are now 20 feet tall on the north side of the woods. Tamaracks donated by Mike Rosen are thriving in the damp field to the west. Trees we rescued from an area destined to become a Nortel parking lot are creating a diverse panorama of colour in the fall. Maples came from an Evergreen grant to restore woodlots after the 1998 ice storm, and others were donated by local dog walkers, who just wanted to help.



Fall tamaracks, planted as seedlings in 1996, now tower in the damp field north of the woods.

The woods have changed considerably over the last 20 years and they keep changing. The large Green Ash trees that dominate the woodlot will likely disappear over the next 5 years as emerald ash borers find them. The oaks and conifers should remain, but it will be a while before anything we've planted fills in the spaces. At this point, we're trying to get the species mix right — aiming for a mixed forest of native trees common in this region — controlling or removing invasives, and trying to keep things from changing too rapidly.

Sandy has been a volunteer at the FWG for over 20 years. She is especially interested in the Ash Woodlot, where she spends considerable time weeding out invasive species to give the many wildflowers room to grow.

Craft Corner: Bird Feed Wreath and Tree Ornaments

text by T Stanton-Kennedy

Sure, you have a bird feeder that you enjoy monitoring all season, but why not add a bit of creative craftiness to your wildlife feeding? Our cold Ottawa winters allow for a variety of do-it-yourself bird-feeding blocks. Why not pull out that bundt pan, those thick cookie cutters or the novelty muffin tray you found on clearance and create your own bird feed wreath or Christmas tree ornaments?

YOU WILL NEED:

- ◆ A BUNDT PAN OR OTHER SUITABLE MOULD (MAKE SURE IT IS DEEPER THAN 4 CM [1.5 INCHES] OR YOUR CREATION MIGHT CRACK AT FIRST NIBBLE!)
- ◆ 2 MIXING BOWLS
- ◆ WOODEN SPOON
- ◆ RUBBER SPATULA
- ◆ NO-STICK COOKING SPRAY
- ◆ 2 TABLESPOONS OR FOUR ¼-OZ SACHETS UNFLAVOURED GELATINE (NOTE: NOT JELLO!)
- ◆ 8 TABLESPOONS COLD WATER
- ◆ 1½ CUPS HOT WATER
- ◆ 8 CUPS BIRDSEED (TRY FOR A MIX WITH HIGH AMOUNTS OF SUNFLOWER SEEDS – ALWAYS POPULAR!)
- ◆ 1-2 METRES OF WIDE RIBBON, RAFFIA TWINE OR FABRIC STRIPS
- ◆ OPTIONAL: UNSALTED NUTS, NATURAL DRIED FRUIT, SUMAC SEEDS
- ◆ POSSIBLY: AN UNSHARPENED PENCIL



1. Prepare 8 cups of your seed mix in a bowl and reserve. Consider researching your target winter bird's favourite nibbles and prepare your mix accordingly.
2. Spray bundt pan or mould with non-stick spray. Don't skip this step unless you like chiselling bird seed out of your cookware.
3. Pour 8 tablespoons cold water into the second mixing bowl and add the gelatine. Allow to sit for a minute.

(Continued on page 13)

4. Add the 1½ cups of hot water and stir 2 to 3 minutes until the gelatine is dissolved.
5. Add your birdseed mix and stir. Allow to sit for a few minutes, then stir again. Repeat this wait-and-stir a second time. You are trying to ensure that all the seed absorbs water and that the gelatine is evenly distributed.
6. Spoon the mixture into your pan, pressing down firmly to get it as compact as possible. A rubber spatula is ideal for this task.
7. If you are using thick cookie cutters to make ornaments, make a hole for hanging using the blunt end of a pencil. Better to do this before the mix hardens!
8. Refrigerate for at least three hours to allow the mix to harden.
9. Invert pan and tap the base carefully to loosen your wreath. If it is proving recalcitrant, just warm the pan slightly.
10. Tie ribbon or raffia twine around one end and hang outside.
11. If you make ornaments, thread them with ribbon or twine, then use metal ornament hooks to hang them on trees instead of (or along with) regular plastic ornaments.
12. Enjoy the festive atmosphere as birds come to feed at your lovely creations!



Killam Fulbright Exchange Students Help Out with DSV

text and photos by Barry Cottam



On arrival - before they got wet!

Friday Sept. 14 brought both rain and 45 Killam Fulbright exchange students to the FWG. The Killam Fulbright brings students from across North America together for kick-off and wrap-up events in Ottawa and Washington, respectively. In between, students spend a school year in their neighbouring country. This event was part of the Ottawa meeting and has been in the works most of the summer; it's the first such activity for this program.

Fulbright Canada orchestrated the students, who arrived by bus at 10, while we arranged tours of the FWG led by Tony, Renate, Isabelle, and me. The students, rain and all, then went to work in the Hedgerow along the baseball diamond fence and in the area immediately west of the Amphibian Pond. Pulling down heavily podded DSV that had pretty much turned the chain link fence into a solid wall was tricky work, but they managed to clear much of it.

Several students worked on the Hedgerow side, digging away at roots or pulling DSV. A smaller group of about eight students worked near the pond, making contests among themselves to see who could pull the most DSV.

Nature interrupted on occasion. Particularly interesting was a praying mantis egg case found on a DSV leaf, a pretty unusual location. Fortunately, Isabelle Nicol was working with the group and could explain what it was. (It was put in a safe spot and later Connie Clark collected it to keep it overwinter.)

Green Rebel caterers brought yummy lunches, with some left over for the hungry regular FWG volunteers. Tables in the Interpretive Centre were divided into two rows and the students warmed the place with their conversation and energy. The inclement weather persuaded the Fulbright Canada staff to allow the students to vote on whether to return to work until 3 p.m., as originally planned, or return to their hotel. Quite understandably, they decided on the latter, a bit of a disappointment in an otherwise very successful event. They worked almost 70 person-hours in total — an effort that would have taken our Tuesday Invasive Species Group 6-8 weeks!



Isn't pulling DSV fun?!? Note the improvised rain coats.



Hard at work along the fence.

Remember to read the FWG Blog!

Fletcher Wildlife Garden

A long-term habitat project of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

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FEATURED POSTS



Still looking for native plants for your garden? Updated sale list here!

After a day of great sales (thank you!), we have now had a chance to re-inventory our stock and decide what will still be available for sale. The pdf contains this information. Some plants are listed as 'ASK', which means we have very limited numbers. We do have a few plants of Wild Bergamot and... [Continue reading](#)

WORK BEES! COME ON OUT!

Ottawa
Fletcher Wildlife Garden
Weeding Bees

Sundays

8 & 15 Jul / 12 Aug / 9 Sep

8:30AM to 12:30PM

(Meet @ the Interpretation
Centre - bring water,
sunscreen and a hat!)



Have you visited the blog yet to read the content? We try to publish two or three items a week and, for the forgetful among us, there is a handy feature that will send you a notice every time something is published (see smaller image, this page)! Don't be left out; be in the vanguard so you can claim that you read it FIRST!

Look for the "Follow" box at the lower right-hand side of your screen. Click on it to get this larger box where you fill in your information. Conversely, you can scroll down to the very bottom of any page and at the left-hand side you will see a light grey button that says "Follow". Click on this to accomplish the same thing!



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Nature Notes: Plant of the Month



This is a good size Blue Beech or American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), mature enough that you can see the ripples in the bark that give it its other name of Musclewood, though it does begin to flake as the tree grows even larger. Here it is at the most northern extent of its range. It is a shade-loving tree, which prefers moderate soil fertility and moisture. It has a shallow, wide-spreading root system. The wood is heavy and hard, and is used for tool handles, longbows, walking sticks, walking canes and golf clubs. The leaves are eaten by the caterpillars of some Lepidoptera, for example the lo moth (*Automeris io*).

Nature Notes: Bird of the Month

It was a red letter day at FWG today, when I saw 10 of these beautiful Evening Grosbeaks. Back in the 1960s and 1970's, these birds were abundant, and in fall and winter would sweep into the city in huge flocks, descending on feeders and cleaning them out in no time. This feat gave them the nickname of "greedybeaks"! But then, numbers of grosbeaks coming into the city dwindled and by mid-1980's they were not being seen in the same numbers, and by the 1990's it was difficult to find them anywhere within city limits or even nearby. This autumn, recent reports of these birds have appeared from many parts of southern Ontario, so... it was no wonder some should appear at the FWG!



Nature Notes: Bug of the Month



These Autumn Meadowhawks (*Sympetrum vicinum*) are often the last odonate to be found in our region, with records dating into November. In fact, according to local dragonfly expert, Chris Lewis, they have been seen up to 21 November (the latest record for them so far). This species has two separate populations in North America. One is found from Ontario east to Nova Scotia, extending south into the US to Texas and Florida. The other population occurs in British Columbia, Washington and Idaho. The dragonfly will eat almost any soft-bodied flying insect including mosquitoes, flies, small moths, mayflies, and flying ants or termites.

Photo: B Cottam

All Nature Notes photos and text by Christine Hanrahan unless otherwise stated — see more on our PHOTOBLOG: www.pbase.com/fwg!