



## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

### Barry Cottam - 2011 Member of the Year Award

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Barry became a volunteer at the FWG in 2010 and very quickly discovered the invasive alien plant, dog-strangling vine (DSV for short) (*Cynanchum rossicum*). It was, he has said, hate at first sight. He was so appalled at how widespread the plant was, that he decided then and there he must help do something about it. Recognizing that many volunteers had previously tackled DSV, he reckoned that a different, more consistent approach was needed. He spent the winter familiarizing himself with the species, reading everything he could find, and talking to others who had first-hand experience with it. Barry's idea was to form an invasive species group that would regularly tackle all invasive plants at the garden, but with a strong emphasis on DSV, especially in the first few years. Thus, the

Tuesday Invasive Species Group (TISG) was born.

In early 2011, Barry gathered together a group of dedicated volunteers, who met every Tuesday morning, spring through fall, to tackle invasive plant species, in particular, DSV. With Barry's input and advice, one of the volunteers set up a blog charting the weekly progress in text and photos. Barry was also responsible for four DSV work bees that averaged 20 people on each occasion. Not content with working only on the regular Tuesday morning, or with the work bees, Barry often put in long hours at other times too. But apart from the sheer physical labour involved in this very hands-on project, Barry had to coordinate the volunteers. In addition to contacting them if there was a change in plans, and being available for questions and advice, he had to make sure they knew which areas to tackle each week and had the right equipment for the work.

Knowing that control was the key word in this battle against DSV, Barry's main objective was to remove as many seed pods as possible from active production. Two hundred and twenty-five industrial sized bags and innumerable piles of DSV were removed from large sections of the garden. Regular visitors to the FWG commented on the difference. However, Barry knows that one year's work is just the beginning, and the DSV will be back, but so will Barry and his volunteers in 2012 and beyond. He has plans to refine the approach to DSV removal, and also has plans for attracting more volunteers. With his unwavering dedication to this important task, he has made a huge difference at FWG.

As if all this was not enough, Barry also joined the FWG Management Committee where he has quickly become an invaluable member. He has taken on numerous tasks, including researching and overseeing the purchase of a new garden shed (not as simple as it sounds); helping to develop plans for better organizing the nursery, and many other tasks both big and small.

For all of these reasons, we believe that Barry is a fitting recipient of the 2011 Member of the Year Award.

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This page was created 28 January 2013

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