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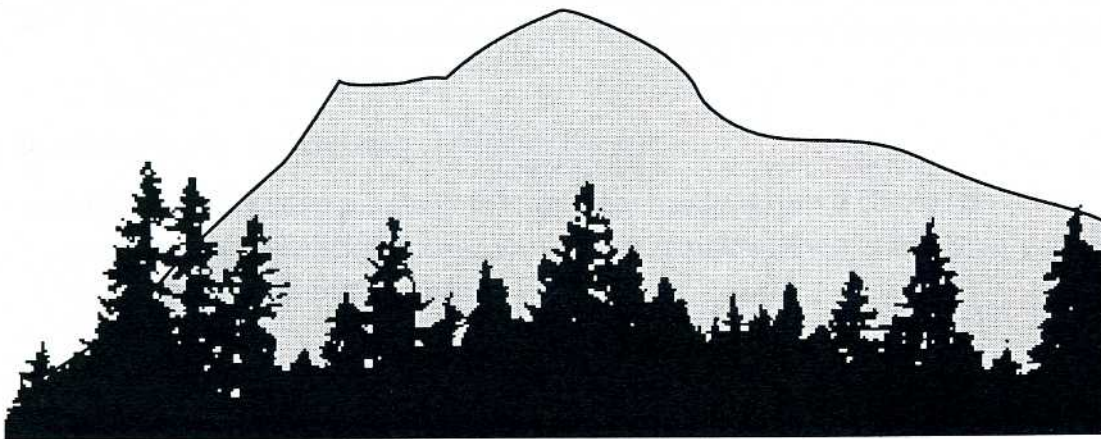
The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society

# Newsletter

November 2000

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## English Ivy—No Friend to Trees

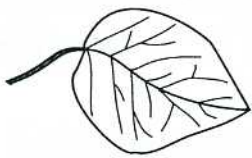
Ivy can look very good in an ornamental garden, so there's a lot of it around. But it escapes easily: it has invaded every natural park anywhere near an urban area.

By now it is a major threat both to natural parks and to ecologically sensitive areas across the Pacific Northwest.

These are the problems:

- As the ivy grows upward into a tree, it becomes so dense that it keeps light from the foliage, and the tree fails and eventually dies.
- The extra mass and weight of the ivy add wind resistance to the tree and increase the chance of stem or root failure in a storm, even in strong and healthy trees.
- The ivy vines can become so thick on the stems of a tree that they can girdle it and kill it.

The distinctive lobed leaves are only the juvenile stage. In a city yard, where it's cut back regularly, the leaves keep this form. It's the juvenile plant that climbs so successfully.



The mature ivy plant (and it *does* mature in natural parks, where it's less likely to be cut back) grows an oval leaf, so very different from the juvenile leaf that many people don't recognize it as English ivy.

In natural parks, ivy creates yet another hazard:

- Like most invasive plants, it is extremely hardy: given a chance it will overtake more delicate indigenous plants, smother them, and occupy their ecological niches in the park.

**Protecting your own trees from English ivy is a first step  
to protecting the trees in the Park.**

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## Ivy Removal in Mount Douglas Park

Our last newsletter mentioned that, conjointly with the Friends of Knockan Hill Park, we had applied to the Provincial Capital Commission for funding to employ a crew of four and a supervisor to remove ivy from our respective parks. This application did not meet with success.

We have now made a similar application to a federal agency called Ecoaction 2000. Once again the four workers would be supplied by an organization called HEARTS that seeks out opportunities for the training and employment of mentally-handicapped youths. We should know by mid-December if this application has been successful.

We also mentioned that we had applied to Saanich Municipality with a similar purpose. We asked for funding to hire two students who would conduct a survey of ivy infestation in the Park, remove it on the two small demonstration plots, and likewise clear it from other similarly manageable plots within the Park. The success of this application will not be known until the municipality has made its budget allocations for next year.

In the meantime, you are encouraged to cut away ivy creepers wherever you see them growing on trees in the Park. Before setting out for a walk, equip yourself with a pair of clippers. Remember that it is from the ends of these creepers that seed spread further afield.

## Broom Bashing

Broom seeds have lain dormant for about two years on the two main sites that we have been clearing, viz. by the Cedar Hill firegate and at the mountain top. Now, however, the moratorium is over. During the past summer young broom has been sprouting fast, thick, and high. Unless, then, we wish our past labour to be set at naught, we must remove this new crop before it reaches the seed-bearing stage. To this end our first work-party will be scheduled for Saturday, November 18, and the second for Saturday, November 25.

Please support this follow-through effort with all your former zeal.

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## **The Braefoot Development**

The wooded tongue of land between Braefoot and Malton roads provides one of the corridors for wildlife that may prevent the Park from lapsing into a wildlife ghetto, with consequent inbreeding and final demise of its larger native fauna. Now that the owners of that land have succeeded in having a sewer line installed to serve their properties, many of them are keen to subdivide. Council, at the time it approved the installation, chose to pretend that future development there was a separate issue. However, it now wants to recover for the municipality some of the cost of the installation by allowing development. To this end, a committee has been formed to determine in what way the subdivision should proceed.

Originally the membership of this body was to be confined to the property owners affected, and to a representative from the Gordon Head Residents' Association. However, after a certain amount of foot-shuffling, representatives from the Garry Oak Meadow Society, the Quadra/Cedar Hill Society, and the Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society have now been admitted as well.

Our concern is that development should not be at a density that would preclude the preservation of a wildlife corridor. Also our experience with the upgrading of Douglas Creek has alerted us to the need to maintain wetland areas to biofilter impurities carried by storm water from built-up areas. Part of the Braefoot land includes a wetland we are anxious to have preserved for that purpose, in conformity with what should be a municipality-wide policy for water management.

### **Restoration of Natural Systems Diploma/Certificate**

The Restoration of Natural Systems diploma/certificate has been developed by University of Victoria to disseminate information about environmental restoration and to provide practical background knowledge, training, and skill development for those working or planning to work in areas related to restoration of natural systems. Courses are offered in a variety of formats and schedules in order to meet the needs of busy people living in and outside the Victoria area.

For more information, please call 250-721-8463 or e-mail [pfaulds@uvcs.uvic.ca](mailto:pfaulds@uvcs.uvic.ca)

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## The Creek

### *Coho, Chum, and Spawned-Out Carcasses*

On June 10th we picked up the egg trays that we implanted on March 11th. We had an astonishing egg-to-fry survival, 84 spoiled eggs out of the original 2200.

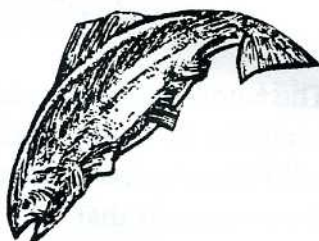
At the time we were digging up the trays it was noted for the first time that the numbers of fry in the stream were diminishing. Up until this time there were abundant fry in the stream, growing visibly larger each week. Subsequent minnow trapping has not produced any fry whatsoever.

The mystery is: where did they go? I haven't seen one dead fish in the Creek this year. It is possible that there are lots of fry in the creek—survival in the wild depends on hiding skills. But to avoid leaving a blank spot in the seasonal development of fry, we have transplanted more mature fry of the same age class as our eyed eggs. On October 22, with conditions just right, sixteen adults and eleven children seeded the creek with 2000 coho fry. It was a wonderful event. Thanks go out to Goldstream hatchery for the fish.

A few of us picked the rubbish out of the stream channel on October 15 in preparation for the fish transplant. I don't like putting fish into the creek amongst the litter. I will be glad to see the litter trapped at the weir when and if that can be managed.

It is within the range of possibility that we could have some spawners back this year. If you are walking around the stream some time, you may want to watch for spawned-out carcasses. This is the surest indication that the coho have come back. Coho have a reputation for being secretive, and one would be lucky to actually see them spawn. If you see anything, please call me, Bob Bridgeman, at 477-7464. It is difficult to predict when they will cross the beach shallows. Obviously, some kind of a high tide is needed, but how high depends on the state of the beach, and that changes dynamically with each tide and differing stream flow. They could be back as soon as now and right up until Christmas. Likely times are when the creek is flooding and we have a high tide. There are high daytime tides in October, November, and December.

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We are in process of applying for permission to transplant chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*) eggs (from Goldstream Hatchery) into the stream next year. Chum usually occur in the lower reaches of coastal streams. They migrate downstream to sea soon after they emerge from the egg, and are usually, depending on the stream, gone from fresh water by June 1st. The life cycle of this species avoids the difficult summer months that salmon experience in southern coastal streams—especially urban ones. If this strategy pans out we can accomplish a couple of things. We can have the public-awareness benefit of salmon spawning in the stream while we are working on the more difficult problem of reintroducing the threatened coho. And there will be a huge pulse of nutrients entering the aquatic ecosystem with the disintegration of the spawned-out carcasses. Historically, this has been an important event in the lifecycle of every living creature and plant associated with water. As the number of salmon has declined so have the dependent biota—this can be seen pretty much everywhere.

Because we want to replicate natural conditions in the stream as much as possible, we have asked for a permit to transplant some spawned-out salmon carcasses from Goldstream into the creek. At present the thinking is to contain the disintegrating carcasses in coarse natural fibre mesh bags, so as to hold them together in the stream as long as possible. Since the creek is subject to intense, short interval flows, a little extra is required to stop the carcasses from flushing out, so the mesh bags will probably be tied under water into some woody debris structures. Approximately a hundred carcasses have been talked about. I don't anticipate smell being a problem, and as for harmful bacteria it's hard to raise that issue when what is now allowed to pass through the stream kills fish. Permits are required for both these activities, plus we will need the approval of the Parks Department. We will move along on the issue as the permits come through.

Here is probably a good place to recognize Tom Rutherford from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Peter McCully, Manager of the Goldstream Hatchery, for their contribution to our project. Without the paperwork that these people do for us and without the fish that they provide to us we could not do anything. I would also like to thank Tom for the \$400.00 that he supplies us to run the project: it pays for photocopying, resource material, bits of equipment, and the odds and ends that are needed to keep it all together. Thank you.

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