



JERICHO STEWARDSHIP GROUP

Dedicated to restoring and enhancing the natural areas of Jericho Park

Newsletter

Summer 2009

Volume 4, Number 1

Earth Day participants help plant Garry oak meadow

The weather on April 25 – sunny, blue skies and a slight breeze—could not have been any better for the 1,900 volunteers who showed up to help plant 3,082 native plant species at Jericho Park for Earth Day 2009.

The main effort took place in the southwestern portion of the park that was once home to concrete pads and seaplane hangars. When Jericho Park was created in 1968, low-quality fill was dumped on top of the concrete pads and nature was left to its own devices. Unfortunately, the area was quickly populated with weeds and invasive plants such as Scotch broom, Himalayan blackberry and Japanese knotweed. But JSG volunteers have been working over the years and had cleared a large enough area to begin restoring the area to a Garry oak meadow.

Numerous shrubs such as Nootka rose, Saskatoon, oceanspray and other wildlife-friendly plants were installed along the edges of the meadow. Wildflowers such as western columbine, wooly sunflower and pearly everlasting were planted in the meadow's centre. (Please don't pick! -- they're used by butterflies and hummingbirds.)

A big thanks to JSG volunteers for working so hard in



Photo: Dawn Hanna

the rain (see above) to prepare the site. And to Vancouver Park Board staff, Evergreen, Business Objects and all the volunteers who made the day a success!

Mason bees move in to Jericho Park condo

This spring, a new "high-rise" building went up in the park – a 720-unit condominium tower for mason bees. And while real estate development isn't usually compatible with park values, this project is.

As you may have heard in news reports, many of the insect species that we depend upon to pollinate plants (both native and crop species) are in decline. Human activities that have caused habitat loss, along with pesticide use and the impacts of disease, are the main causes of decline.

The Jericho Stewardship Group, in cooperation with the Environmental Youth Alliance and the Vancouver Park Board, is caretaking the mason bee condo, located just south of the bridge across the pond. The bees have happily been buzzing about, pollinating some of the native species in the adjacent forest, including big-leaf maple, Indian plum and bitter cherry.

For more info about the mason bee project at Jericho and



Photo: Linda Mueller

other Vancouver parks, go to www.masonbeevancouver.com

Featured native flora: large leaved lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)

Name: Large-leaved lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*)

- Family: Pea (Leguminosae)
- Habitat: fields and roadsides
- Height: 50 to 150 cm high
- Flower size: Racemes 15 to 45 cm
- Flower color: Blue or blue-violet
- Flowering time: May to July
- Origin: western North America

Wildlife use:

Hummingbirds, butterflies, bees and other insect species use the nectar of the large-leaved lupine.

Fun facts:

- *Lupinus polyphyllus* was first “discovered” by explorer and plant collector David Douglas (for whom the Douglas fir is named). He introduced the plant to England in 1826.
- *Lupinus polyphyllus* fixes nitrogen so is a valuable species on degraded sites; excellent tap root growth may also have value for decompacting soils.

Grow it at home:

Lupinus polyphyllus will grow best in a sunny site where the soil is slightly acidic and well-draining. Plants can be grown from seed or purchased at nurseries.

Large-leaved lupine produces lots of seeds and can spread quickly, so be prepared to deadhead if you want to restrict it to a certain area.

Warning:

The seeds of large-leaved lupine are toxic to humans and animals. Symptoms of lupine ingestion in sheep include labored breathing, depression, coma, and death from asphyxiation. Tremors and convulsions may occur.



Photo: Dawn Hanna

Pretty in purple: In some parts of Jericho Park, large-leaved lupine fills the fields.

Join us!

We meet the second Sunday of each month to remove invasive plants, replant native species and do other projects to enhance wildlife habitat at Jericho Park.

We meet at 9 a.m. at the wooden bridge where the ponds narrows. We work until 1 p.m. (weather permitting), but if you can only manage an hour or two, that's just fine.

Be sure to dress for the elements with good footwear



– hiking boots or sturdy rubber boots are best – and clothing to keep you cool. Bring sunscreen, hat, a snack and water.

And while we do have tools, feel free to bring your favourite lopper, pruning saw, clippers or shovel.

Jericho Stewardship Group (JSG) is a group of volunteers who work with the Vancouver Parks Board with the idea of making Jericho a better place both for the park's wildlife and park visitors. For more information, contact

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