



## JERICOHO STEWARDSHIP GROUP

*Dedicated to restoring and enhancing the natural areas of Jericho Park*

Newsletter

Summer 2006

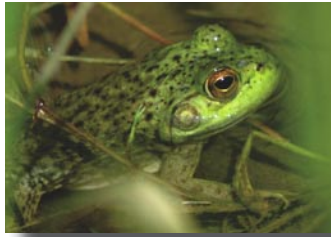
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### Jericho wetlands face increasing problems

The pond and marsh at Jericho Park provide critical habitat in the city for a variety of wildlife, including dragonflies, herons, frogs and muskrats.

But more and more, they're coming under threat from a variety of sources. The drier than usual summer has lowered water levels, reducing the size of wetland area, producing toxic algae blooms and allowing invasive plant species to gain new ground.

In the marsh, for example, the population of yellow flag iris has



exploded. In 1996, a plant survey of Jericho Park no yellow flag was recorded. In 2004, JSG volunteer John Coope counted 1,000 stems of yellow flag in the marsh. This year, he counted 5,000 -- a five-fold increase in less than two years.

As well, volunteers have noticed a big increase in the number of bullfrogs. That's bad news for native amphibians, ducklings and songbirds -- all eaten by bullfrogs.

JSG is working with the Vancouver Park Board to come up with some long-term solutions to keep Jericho's



Photo: Dawn Hanna

Pretty but perilous: Invasive species such as yellow flag (above) and American bullfrogs.

wetlands healthy. We'll tell you more in future issues.

### Jericho plays host to World Urban Forum delegates

In June, Vancouver was the site of the United Nations-sponsored World Urban Forum. More than 10,000 delegates from around the world attended the presentations, symposia and associated events.

Jericho Stewardship Group was proud to be chosen to host one of only nine tours for delegates in Greater Vancouver. During a two-hour tour, delegates from as far away as Sweden, Brazil, Malaysia and Uganda learned about the variety of habitats at Vancouver's second-largest park, about the threats that face it and the work that community volunteers, in conjunction with the Vancouver Park Board, are doing to restore and enhance nature.



Photo: Susan Limdenberger

Delegates learn about some of the invasive plant species that infest Jericho and about how the community works together to control them and make the park a better place for both wildlife and park visitors.

# Invasive of the Month: Policeman's helmet (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

**The culprit:** *Impatiens glandulifera*, aka policeman's helmet and Himalayan balsam. Native to the western Himalayas, it was introduced to Canada as a garden ornamental. An annual that can grow from one to three metres high, it produces pretty pink, sweetly-scented blossoms.

**The Problem:** Policeman's helmet aggressively invades moist forests, riparian zones and wetlands. It displaces native plant species that are used by wildlife for food and shelter. As well, it can grow in stands so dense that it can alter or impede the movement of water. In fall, when the plants die back, they can create huge areas of bare streambank, leaving them vulnerable to erosion.

Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds.. When ripe, the seed capsules "explode" and can catapult seeds up to six metres away. The seeds (which float) have been known to be transported on streams up to 10 kilometres distant.

## How to control *Impatiens glandulifera*:

Hand pulling the entire plant (roots and all) works well. It's best to pull plants before they have flowered and



Photo: Dawn Hanna

*Impatiens glandulifera* may be pretty but the problems it causes – displacement of wildlife-friendly plants, flooding and erosion – are not.

before they have set seed. Extensive seed banks may be present, so you'll likely have to repeat the pulls for a couple of years.

## Alternatives for your garden:

If you're looking for a tall plant, consider planting a shrub such as hardhack (*Spiraea douglasii*) with

its sweet-scented pink blooms or red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) with its white blossoms. If you're looking for something more herbaceous, try fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*), western columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) or tiger lily (*Lilium columbianum*).

## 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.

If you're interested, just meet us at the wooden bridge between the two ponds at Jericho at 9 a.m. 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. That means good footwear -- hiking boots or sturdy rubber boots are best -- and clothing to keep



you cool.

Although we usually have goodies, it's a good idea to bring a snack and water.

And while we do have some tools, if you have a favourite lopper, pruning saw, clippers or shovel, please bring it with you.

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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