



Arboretum News

Summer 2020

Volunteering at the Arboretum

We have had a great start to our volunteer season. Although we couldn't hold our Annual Spring Cleaning, or our Community Planting Day in May, we have had 9 Volunteer Events so far. We have weeded and mulched our Commemorative and Specimen Trees, weeded our Nursery twice, weeded Flora Aurora 1, and pruned shrubs and trees in Flora Aurora 1. Over the 9 events we have welcomed 92 volunteers. Seven of these are new volunteers.



Given that our work environment is the very best available - nature - we have been able to follow some very practical social-distancing guidelines. We bring our own tools, wear our own gardening gloves and even bring our own pens to sign in!

This spring, there were 29 trees taken from the Nursery and planted in the Arboretum - some to replace struggling trees, others to fill in areas that just need a tree. We're proud of this - that our youngsters made it to the big show!

Volunteers help with planting and maintaining trees, shrubs and perennials; keeping the Arboretum clean; and assisting with special events. Our volunteers are a dedicated, friendly and hardworking group. They set a wonderful example, and show the power of individuals to effect change.



The Aurora Arboretum is maintained through the Town of Aurora and a group of dedicated volunteers. Some of our enthusiastic volunteers include a retired journalist and musician, a superannuated career educator, a technology sales manager, a recent grad and some University students.



Maintenance activities which include mowing, clearing grass trails and tree trimming require operation of special equipment for which necessary training is provided. There are also enjoyable assignments involving planting and watering using a John Deere tractor and water trailer.

Volunteering at the Arboretum continued.....

Recently, while clearing the area around the Field of Gold access path (Entrance 2, of the Tim Jones Trail at Woodroof Crescent,) a hidden gem was found, an attractive dark leafed Black Lace Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* 'Eva').

As we worked our way trimming the section, we were rewarded with the vision of a previously unnoticed massive Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) tree with a 133 inch waistline. This extraordinary tree exudes grandeur and generations of history. The team went home that day gratified with the discovery of this monumental awe-inspiring tree.

The team offers a warm welcome to new volunteers and would like you to join us. The work provides the ideal work environment – outdoors - social distancing not a problem.

The volunteer work will continue until the snow flies - maybe beyond! Stay tuned and if you haven't come out yet, please consider sharing some time with us. The Arboretum is almost exclusively dependent on our Volunteers. You can sign up through our web-site:

membersandvolunteers@auroraarboretum.ca

Thank you to all who give us your valuable time. On many hot, hot days it would be much easier to stay home, but you chose to come out early in the morning, to sweat, get dirty and tired, just because you want to be a volunteer. That's amazing and we truly appreciate it.

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit"

Nelson Henderson

Northern Catalpa - *Catalpa speciosa*

The Northern Catalpa is a deciduous tree with an oval form that will grow to approximately 17 metres in height and spread to about 9 metres wide. It is a native tree to Ontario and there are several in the Arboretum at the edge of the Field of Gold (Daffodil Area). The leaves are large and heart-shaped, which give it a nice texture in the landscape. One of the many beautiful features of this tree is its showy and abundant white orchid like flowers that come out in bunches during the early summer. The flowers, which have a yellow interior colour, attract hummingbirds and are an ideal food source for them. The tree also produces a long narrow bean pod shaped fruit in late summer that will last on the tree into the winter..

The Northern Catalpa grows at a relatively fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 70 years. This tree does best planted in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. The tree tolerates a variety of soil conditions including pH levels, and it is able to handle environmental salt. This tree does grow well in urban conditions and will even thrive within dense city environments. If planted next to roads, driveways and pathways the area under the tree will require some regular clean-up.

The Northern Catalpa is a beautiful accent tree for the landscape and we invite you to enjoy the ones in the Aurora Arboretum year-round.



This newsletter is published by the Aurora Community Arboretum Inc.

For more information on Arboretum activities or events, or how to become a member, telephone (905) 727-3492 or email: trees@auroraarboretum.ca or membersandvolunteers@auroraarboretum.ca

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