



# Arboretum News

## Winter 2021

### Winter Birds in the Arboretum

You may or may not have noticed the variety of birds that are still visiting – and inhabiting – the Arboretum. Lucky for us, birds are exempt from ‘lockdowns’.

Thanks to some keen birders, we have a list of observed birds since November. Some will be very familiar, others are a pleasant surprise. Here they are:

<i>Northern Cardinal</i>	<i>House Finch</i>	<i>Red-Tailed Hawk</i>
<i>Northern Shrike</i>	<i>Common Redpoll</i>	<i>Raven</i>
<i>Song Sparrow</i>	<i>Red-Breasted Nuthatch</i>	<i>European Starling</i>
<i>Dark-Eyed Junco</i>	<i>Cooper’s Hawk</i>	<i>Goldfinch</i>
<i>Black Capped Chickadee</i>	<i>Mourning Dove</i>	<i>White-Breasted Nuthatch</i>
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	<i>American Tree Sparrow</i>	<i>Blue Jay</i>
<i>Merlin</i>	<i>Mallard</i>	<i>American Crow</i>
<i>Hermit Thrush</i>	<i>Ring-Billed Gull</i>	<i>Trumpeter Swan</i>

Northern Shrike



Hermit Thrush



Coopers Hawk



### Memberships for 2021

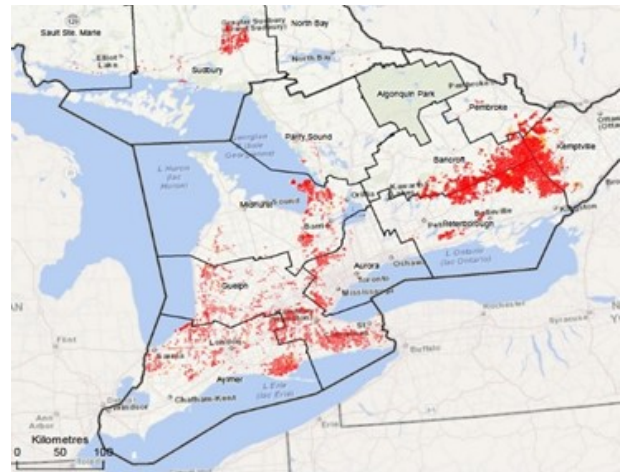
Memberships for 2021 at the Aurora Arboretum are now due. If you are not a member, please consider joining. At \$20, this is a great way to support this wonderful urban oasis. During Covid, the trails in the Arboretum remain open and provide a place to exercise, get some fresh air and enjoy nature. Please remember to practice social distancing and follow current Covid guidelines.

To become a member, please visit <https://auroraarboretum.ca/> and complete the membership application.

# A Community Effort To Combat The Gypsy Moth



You might have noticed the brown egg masses of the invasive Gypsy Moth on trees in your neighbourhood. A single adult Gypsy Moth can lay up to 1500 eggs, while their caterpillars eat on average 1 square meter of leaves during their lifetime. These voracious eaters pose a serious threat to our forest. Trees that experience leaf loss (defoliation) of half or more of their leaves (high level) are more susceptible to stress, and often don't survive an invasion.



In Ontario, defoliation caused by the Gypsy Moth has dramatically increased from 47,203 hectares in 2019 to 586,385 hectares in 2020. To put that into perspective, in 2020 defoliation caused by Gypsy Moth occurred over an area 82% of the size of the entire GTA. Highlighted in red on the map are areas with mid-high levels of defoliation. The MNR's most recent survey indicates that Aurora is at risk of high defoliation levels in 2021.

Luckily, individual and grassroots actions to curb the spread of this invasive species have proven to be quite effective! A group of concerned Aurorans have begun removing egg mass by hand in the Case Woodlot on Henderson Drive this winter. Together they have removed over 1.5 kg of egg masses from the forest! However, more action is needed. Most of Case Woodlot has yet to be covered, and the threat continues across Aurora's neighbourhoods and parks, including Aurora's arboretum. Please inspect any trees on your property as well.

This is a safe and fun outdoor activity you can do alone or with your family during the pandemic.

All you need is a spoon, a container, and some soapy water. Place your container beneath the egg mass and scrape it off completely using your spoon. (Knocking the eggs onto the ground is not effective, as they will still hatch in the spring.) Once you have finished collecting. Place the eggs into



soapy water for at least 48 hours. Afterwards, the eggs should be destroyed and you can safely dispose of them.

If you would like to join the efforts in Case Woodlot, or if you would like to start an initiative in your own park or neighbourhood and need support, contact Julien at [society.homegrown@gmail.com](mailto:society.homegrown@gmail.com) to coordinate. All efforts are being recorded as part of a citizen science program. Click [here](#) to watch a short educational video on the Gypsy Moth.

*Contributed by Julien Robertson, Home Grown Society*



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## Aurora Arboretum Winter 2021 project

If you have walked through the Arboretum in late January through early February, you would have heard the sound of chain saws or a woodchipper and seen enormous piles of branches and eventually woodchips. Virtually all of the material removed was invasive European Buckthorn. Buckthorn is a huge problem as it out-competes our native trees and shrubs, often forming dense stands. Each year, Arboretum volunteers remove some relatively small portions but nothing on the scale of this winter. One of our regular contractors, Urban Forest Associates (Urban Forestry & Ecological Restoration) received a grant and have kindly done an incredible clearing job over the last 3 weeks. They worked extremely efficiently, are skilled and professional and did the job at no cost to the Arboretum /Town for the labour.



On either side of the trail leading to the Town Hall from the sport dome and also up to and around the farm pond, buckthorn removal was going on. This has opened up large areas which can now be planted with desirable trees over the next few years. This area is part of the Arboretum's Specimen Tree area where we showcase a wide variety of trees and shrubs that can be grown in this part of the world, with an emphasis on native species.

The newly cleared area will allow us to demonstrate even more interesting, attractive and wildlife-friendly tree species, hopefully encouraging visitors to plant some of these in their own yards.

In non-Covid times, we plan for a number of planting projects during the year with opportunity for people to get involved and help to improve the Arboretum, hopefully we will be able to do that again soon.





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## Maintenance Volunteers

The countdown to the first day of spring on March 20th has finally begun after an arduous and seemingly endless winter.

One can only hope there will be reprieves to stay-at-home orders as the nice weather returns.

For those looking forward to returning to Aurora's Community Arboretum for an extraordinary outdoor experience, perhaps consider joining the team of dedicated volunteers that maintain this exceptional haven in Aurora.



Volunteers assist with a variety of maintenance projects, from weeding, planting trees and shrubs, to trail mowing and trimming. This is a rewarding and beneficial opportunity for anyone with a few hours to spare each week.

For further information please contact [auroraarboretum.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:auroraarboretum.volunteer@gmail.com)

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## Virtual Tree Tour

The Aurora Arboretum invites you to a free virtual tree tour.

**Saturday, March 13 – 10:00 a.m.**

Eight specimens of coniferous trees found in the Arboretum will be featured.

Suitable for ages 18+.

Space is limited, so please register early.

To register, email [auroraarboretum.info@gmail.com](mailto:auroraarboretum.info@gmail.com) and provide your name and email.

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: [auroraarboretum.info@gmail.com](mailto:auroraarboretum.info@gmail.com) or [auroraarboretum.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:auroraarboretum.volunteer@gmail.com)

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