

# What's Growing On? The Fletcher Wildlife Garden Newsletter

www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php

July 2011

## Making the Difference - You! — — — — —

### ***Various groups and events bring much-needed targeted effort to FWG***

A regular volunteer commented how lovely the Back Yard Garden was while peacefully eating her lunch. We all know that, but it affirmed the funny truth that as regular volunteers we don't always take the time to stop and enjoy the Beebalm, so focused are we on the task at hand. Fortunately, other visitors do appreciate the effort and do join in. This summer, we've hosted two corporate volunteer groups - from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and IBM - one group of youth and held two events where anyone with free time on a Sunday morning could help make a difference.

These events are as much about enhancing the various habitats at FWG as they are about re-energising long-term volunteers. Some days the Dog-Strangling Vine seems too much, the BYG empty and ratty, the various site visitors who vandalize or litter demoralizing. However, with the fresh influx of effort, we get something new done and new hope ourselves. These groups make a difference, twice-over!

***THANK YOU!!!!***

### **Contact Us!**

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### **Take Note!**

**This summer, Sundays from 12-4 pm will see volunteers keeping the Interpretation Centre open for visitors and answering questions in the garden.**

**If you want to come out and pull DSV or weed in the BYG, that is a great time to do it!**



G Mastromatteo

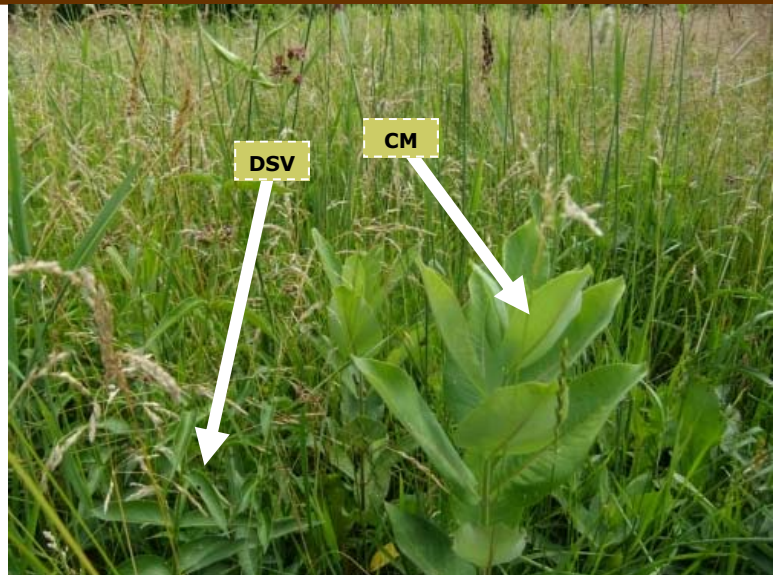


## All In Together! Weeding Bees in the Butterfly Meadow

"Many hands make light work" - never truer than when weeding our current arch foe, Dog-Strangling Vine (AKA Swallowwort). We had an excellent turn out on July 10 and 17 for some intensive weeding in the Butterfly Meadow. While the Tuesday morning Invasive Species Group valiantly battles DSV in large swathes, the Butterfly Meadow is a different kettle of, well, weeds. Here, each vine must be pulled by hand and sometimes painstakingly untwined from "good" plants. No tools here!

Each person took a chunk of land and started in from the path, clearing ahead of them as they went. The DSV is in pod now, while some is still in flower. Waiting much later would mean spreading seeds around. The Butterfly Meadow is in constant battle with the DSV, so while we haven't eliminated pulled plants entirely, or even DSV from the meadow, at least it won't go to seed and will allow those good plants to keep growing un-shaded or pulled down. Most important, it means any visiting Monarch Butterflies (we are trying to build Canada's largest Monarch Butterfly Waystation - a Disneyland for our long-traveling friends!) will not mistakenly lay their eggs on DSV rather than Common Milkweed, resulting in larval death.

Also important was introducing DSV to first-time helpers, helping share the knowledge of its identification. With DSV growing in Glebe gardens, along the parkways and train right-of-ways, the only defence we have currently is an offence on outbreaks. If you see it, pull it! Otherwise, we'll lose many naturalization projects and species diversity in our natural areas.



▲ DSV beside Common Milkweed - a Monarch nightmare!

◀ Volunteers had to physically unwind DSV from larger plants.



**Working through the tall plants.**



**The bowl garden plantings in the Butterfly Meadow.**



**The pile of DSV! Blocking an access to the ravine through dead sumac covered by twining DSV.**

# Art in the Garden



This spring, FWG played host to a group of artists, come to appreciate nature from a completely different "aspect"! The botanical drawing class, taught by Kerri Weller out of the Nepean Visual Arts Centre, visited the BYG to observe plants up close and over time.

Instead of observing insect use or time to seed development, the students evaluated such factors as figure and ground, shading, texture and colour. They would present their day's work at the end of each session for critique. As individuals interested in botanical drawing, students demonstrated their naturalist streak by toting along their own reference books or using FWG's extensive library. Nevertheless, some plants defied identification!

Botanical drawing is a very technical art form and was extremely important in the early days of organized nature exploration. Think of Darwin traipsing off to the Galapagos - no camera, but nature still required capture! Samples did not always travel or dry well, so capturing a species' visual characteristics on paper was essential for a growing knowledge base of plants. The results would be used not only to catalogue specimens and share new plant discoveries, but also the very important task of enabling other people to use the drawings as reference in identification at other locations. Accurate botanical drawing was essential for scientific progress in plant identification and cataloguing. Even today, some botanists prefer a technical drawing to a photograph when identifying a particularly troublesome sample.

Whether as part of an art collection or your personal reference guide, be sure to stop and appreciate the skill and beauty that is required to produce such masterpieces!

**The class!**



[www.ottawa.ca/residents/arts/courses\\_workshops/nepean\\_visual](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/arts/courses_workshops/nepean_visual)

*Various classes are offered on botanical drawing and other artistic endeavours during the year.*

In this mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, to stop rushing around, to sit quietly on the grass, to switch off the world and come back to the earth, to allow the eye to see a willow, a bush, a cloud, a leaf . . . I have learned that what I have not drawn I have never really seen.

Frederick Franck, *The Zen of Seeing*



K Weller



I Legere



C Martin

# IBM Centennial Celebration at the FWG

This year marks IBM's 100th anniversary. To celebrate, IBMers voluntarily participated in a day of service on June 15, 2011. Three IBMers chose to come to the Fletcher Wildlife Garden to help start a fern walk and make some headway in our ongoing battle against swallowwort (AKA DSV).

*By Maddy Knuth*



*Lise makes a start on the swallowwort while Julie starts at the other end of the patch.*

## POT DONATIONS

At FWG, we *only* use 4" square pots and the large, round black pots from shrubs or trees. We also use nursery trays.

Anything else can be recycled at a Loblaws store!



*The area cleared of swallowwort.*



*All done and covered in woodchips!*

**SPECIAL THANKS TO LIS ALLISON FOR MAPPING OUT A PLANTING PLAN FOR THE FERN TRAIL AND DONATING HOME-GROWN FERNS AND WILDFLOWERS FROM HER OWN GARDEN!**

## WANTED: Items FWG Could Use!

The Butterfly Meadow Group is looking for a used pool liner for their work.  
Contact: [dlepagehibou@sympatico.ca](mailto:dlepagehibou@sympatico.ca)

Do you have excess Common Milkweed in your garden you could dig up and donate? The Butterfly Meadow is looking for more!

We ALWAYS need more volunteers! Flexible hours, duties and levels of exertion. Be it a family day or a solo operation! Join a group or bring friends for a one-off bee. Mail us: [fletcher@ofnc.ca](mailto:fletcher@ofnc.ca)



## Activity: Path Creation!



The new path around one section of the Butterfly Meadow is almost finished. The main goal is to create a barrier between the planted meadow and the Dog-Strangling Vine. Already have a day job? Come help with our evening group! Drop a line: [fletcher@ofnc.ca](mailto:fletcher@ofnc.ca) or come Wednesdays starting at 6 pm until sundown.

## Nature Notes: In Bloom

One of the prettiest and most distinctive native grasses, Bottlebrush Grass (*Elymus hystrix*) has a marvellous architectural inflorescence seemingly ready to do double-duty as a bottle brush! Several caterpillars use it as a food source. This grass is also interesting as it tolerates partial shade and can be found in woodlands! Flowers are very small, but they are in bloom here!



## Nature Notes: Bug of the Month



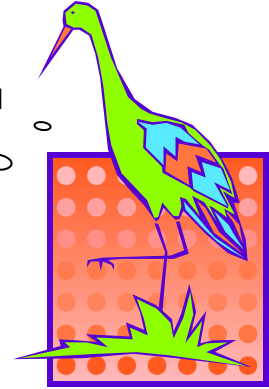
That big thorn-like projection on this Treehopper (*Enchenopa binotata*) is actually the pronotum which in many treehopper species has developed to cover much of the body, somewhat like a shield. Many species have these thorn-like or horn-like projections. On twigs of shrubs they look like parts of the plant! You can see the head with a big dark eye under the "thorn", on the right side of the insect.

## Nature Notes: Bird of the Month



This Juvenile Green Heron has taken to using a downed tree in the pond as his personal fishing dock. He is completely unfussed by the audience he garners - he must have seen the Fletcher logo and decided we obviously are made just for him! He likes to snack on frogs, but will quite happily snap up a passing dragonfly.

*Say, I think my green is a lot more impressive than that of this young'un!!*



## Nature Notes: Critter of the Month

The Mother Mallard didn't seem very bothered by us standing on the bridge and photographing her, but clearly she was keeping a wary eye out nonetheless. I was surprised to see a duckling here. There have been a couple of mallards on the pond from spring right on through, but they've always hung out together and showed no signs of having a nest. Well, just shows how things can happen right under our eyes!



## Knowledge Note: The many shades of. . . Shade!

We're often asked about good plants for shade, and can point people towards our Back Yard Garden's Woodland Walk for first-hand experience. However, not everyone is dealing with the same sort of shade. There is dappled shade, like part of our Walk. This is the ideal shade as light gets through in early spring giving herbaceous plants a head-start. Then, there is temporal shade - during part of the day the ground is shaded to whatever degree by an object blocking the sun. Depending on how long the area is in shade, you may or may not have to think about shade plants. Slightly worse is Norway Maple Shade. A non-native tree, it has different leaf-out and leaf-loss timing, as well as different shade density. Norway Maples create dense shade and tend to outcompete whatever is planted beneath them - avoid planting these trees! The last kind, and most difficult sort of shade, is building shade. An area in perpetual gloom is not favoured by any plant. You may be stuck looking for non-natives such as hostas, which will look depressed but will likely still grow. For dire cases, consider plastic plants or installing a beautiful rock garden in a moment of Zen - stones don't need to photosynthesize!