

On the Don Don

This publication can be viewed online at www.trca.on.ca/don_newsletter

Dream in technicolour

By Janice Palmer, Don Watershed Regeneration Council Member

A new nursery catalogue boggles the mind with so many colours and forms of plants. Choices! Let's make it a bit easier for you this year. Make your first criterion native species, from the Toronto area, not just anywhere in Canada. There are native species which provide plants with various height, foliage, flowers and fruit. You may have a certain palette of colours in mind - see what the 'native plants' have to offer.

There are native species that tolerate dry conditions but others require moderate to high amounts of moisture. Some do well in sun and others do well in shade. Matching conditions required and conditions on your property must be considered before you make your final choices. If you want to attract wildlife, you need to consider what the flowers, fruit and seeds offer. Consider Common Milkweed, New England Aster and White Baneberry.

Absolutely all gardens require attention! Appropriate watering is necessary. You will want to remove unwanted plants to reduce the competition for light and soil nutrients. It's a common practice to deadhead flowers to keep them blooming longer; however, many native species, though listed as perennials, are really self-seeding - they come up again the following year but from their own seeds, not the original root. Deadheading removes the seeds necessary for next year's plants and also limits seed supply for birds.

If you really feel you must have your favourite, colourful, non-native perennials or annuals, try to pick species whose seeds are not carried by the wind or spread by animals. If your property is directly adjacent to a park or ravine, avoid all non-native species. Even those that do not spread by fruit or seed can spread by underground rhizomes, surface runners or layering of lower branches. Especially nasty are English Ivy, Periwinkle, Forsythia and Euonymus. The former two plants smother native spring ephemerals and groundcover and even climb shrub and tree stems and trunks to penetrate the foliage or crown.

A thick layer of woodchip mulch on the soil all around your desired plants benefits you and your plants. Mulch allows water to penetrate into the soil but reduces the amount of evaporation from the soil surface...less watering required. Although seeds from unwanted plants will germinate in mulch, their roots are much weaker...easier to remove by pulling. Be careful not to let the mulch form a mound around the main stems of flowers and shrubs, this may contribute to excess moisture and lead to stem rot. Marble pieces may look attractive but tend to get lost in the soil over the years and do not offer the advantages of woodchip mulch. It's best to avoid mulch made from wood fibres that have been coloured with dyes and bark 'nuggets' that have been treated to resist decay. If your soil consists of a lot of sand or clay and lacks humus, add your own compost. You can get compost at a local

Environment Day or purchase various composted manures found at garden centres. Compost adds nutrients and is a good soil enhancer but does not have the advantages of woodchip mulch mentioned above. Work the compost into the soil before planting and mulching.

Happy Gardening!!!

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Common Milkweed
Asclepias syriaca



New England Aster
Aster novae-angliae



White Baneberry (Dolls' eyes)
Actaea pachypoda



Another example of home composting



Composted manures

theDon

TORONTO AND REGION
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Paddle, walk or bike the Don on Sunday, May 3

It's that time of year, when nature and adventure lovers gather to open the warm-weather recreation season and challenge the Don River! And although we are now fully booked for public participation in Paddle the Don, there is still space available for corporations to participate in the **Banrock Station Corporate Team Challenge**. This is a great opportunity to convince your company and fellow employees to start a new company tradition and Paddle the Don as a team. A minimum \$1,000 donation is required per team. Complete details can be found at www.paddledon.ca/corporate.shtml

Not a paddler? That's ok too! There is still lot's of other fun activities for Don watershed supporters who prefer to stick to solid ground. Come and discover all that the Don has to offer, whatever your mode of transportation might be!

Take a walk in the Don

Join one of the local 'Jane's Walk' showcasing all of the exciting happenings in the Lower reaches of the Don River.



Percy Park and the Queen Street Bridge, both stops along last years West Don Lands Jane's Walk

Jane's Walk is a series of free neighbourhood walking tours taking place in eight Canadian cities on May 2 & 3, 2009. The walks celebrate the legacy and ideas of urban activist and writer Jane Jacobs who championed a fresh, community-based approach to city building. Two walks of interest are happening in the lower reaches of the Don, near the paddle take-out on Sunday, May 3: a walk of the Lower Don Lands will be led by Ken Greenberg from Greenberg Consultants Inc. and a walk of the West Don lands will be led by representatives from West Don Lands Committee member groups, Waterfront Toronto and Ontario Realty Corporation. Details on each of these walks can be found at www.janeswalk.net/participating_cities/toronto

Join the 'Day in the Don' celebration

by attending the City of Toronto's first Walking Information Fair at Todmorden Mills Heritage Centre, 67 Pottery Road.

If hiking and walking are your 'thing', come out to Todmorden Mills and talk to experts and view information displays from various walking clubs and related agencies. Learn about the rich variety of city walking opportunities:

urban to rural, easy to difficult. Pick-up a free copy of the new "Exploring Toronto's Parks & Trails" map. Guided and self directed walks of the Don River Trail will run between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. For details, visit www.toronto.ca/parks



... or Pedal the Don

Cycle the length of the connected trail in the Lower Don River, from Sunnybrook to the Waterfront.

John Wilson, chair of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don, assisted by the U of T Mountain Biking Team and friends, will lead a bicycle tour, running parallel to the Paddle. This gentle bike hike will stop at various locations to view the high-points of Don River restoration efforts, to share stories and to look at how connected and accessible the Don trails are and could become. This event is in conjunction with Lost Rivers and Jane's Walks. Cycling is primarily off-road on paved trails, with a short section of residential street cycling, at an easy pace. This free event will start at 1 p.m. at the southwest corner of Yonge and Lawrence (near the library) and will finish at the Paddle the Don take-out. On-line registration is required at www.pedalhedon.ca.



2008 Banrock Station Landing Party

By joining any of these exciting events you will be able to watch paddlers as they make their journey down the river to the mouth of the Don. If you are close enough, **come celebrate with us at the Banrock Station Landing Party** which is held at the Paddle the Don take-out located in the parkette on the northwest corner of Villiers Street and Don Roadway. Festivities will begin around 11 a.m. and will continue until the last paddler arrives at about 4:30 p.m.

Healthy Yards web tool:

One gardening 'tool' you can't live without!

Want a rain barrel or composter? Looking for an organic lawn care service provider? Wondering what native plants will grow in your clay soil? Look no further!

Toronto and Region Conservation's Healthy Yards Web Tool connects you, homeowners and gardeners with organizations and government agencies offering healthy yards products, services and information. It also directs you to municipal bylaws and restrictions regarding pesticide use, lawn watering and other related topics specific to your neighbourhood.

Visit www.trca.on.ca/yards today!

Ontario announces province-wide pesticide ban

On Earth Day, April 22, 2009, Ontario's cosmetic pesticides ban will come into effect.

This ban, which will override existing municipal pesticide bylaws, will protect Ontarians from the risks associated with cosmetic pesticides by only allowing the use of certain lower-risk pesticides for controlling weeds and pests in lawns and gardens. Over 80 pesticide ingredients will be banned for cosmetic uses and will in turn impact the sale and use of over 250 products. Exceptions for public health or safety reasons will be made. For more details, visit the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's web site at

www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/news/2009/030401.php

Attend the Richmond Hill Mill Pond Splash Eco-festival

Exhibitors, volunteers and eco-friendly vendors are needed! Contact Michelle Vanderwel, 416-661-6600, ext. 5280, or mvanderwel@trca.on.ca for details. All vendors will be vetted by the Mill Pond Splash organizing committee. Details can be found at www.trca.on.ca/millpondsplash



Hot Don issues and updates

City of Toronto discovers damage in major trunk sewer

In 2008, the City of Toronto began an Environmental Assessment of the Don and Waterfront trunk sewers to accommodate future growth and to evaluate options to create a "twin" of the Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer. During the assessment of the trunk sewer, the City discovered that a section of pipe was in need of repair.

The Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer, located near Coxwell Ave. and O'Connor Dr., is approximately 2.7 metres (nine feet) in diameter, reaches depths of 40 metres (130 feet), services 750,000 residents, and carries wastewater that is three times the flows of the Don River. When constructed in the 1950s, no bypass system was created to divert flows in case of emergency and repair. Due to its depth and size and the extreme volumes of wastewater that runs through it, it was only recently, with modern technology, that an inspection of this pipe was possible. The inspection showed that 60 metres (200 feet) of pipe is damaged. It's not possible to tell how long it has been damaged, but the pipe is operating as it should, with no flow restriction or backup.

The City moved quickly to notify local residents, install sensor monitors in the sewer, in the ground and on the surface, and to begin exploring options for temporary and permanent bypasses. Geotechnical work is underway to figure out the best possible bypass route. Contingency plans are also being developed in the event of a sewer failure. For more information visit:

www.toronto.ca/water or e-mail coxwellsewer@toronto.ca

Draft Don River Watershed Plan is released. Let us know what you think!

Toronto and Region Conservation and its partners are seeking public input on the draft Don River Watershed Plan and concept site plans—providing new scientific information, guiding land use activities, regeneration, and future initiatives in the Don River watershed. Two open houses are planned where you will be able to:

- learn about the issues and opportunities
- discuss concept plans for the Warden Woods (Toronto) and Mud Creek (Toronto) residential neighbourhoods, Maple Nature Reserve (Vaughan), and industrial areas in Toronto
- share your comments and concerns
- find out how you can become involved

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Open House: 6 p.m.

Meeting: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Location: Burgundy Room, North York Memorial Hall, 5110 Yonge Street, Toronto

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Open House: 6 p.m.

Meeting: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Location: Palisade A, Elgin West Community Centre, 11099 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

RSVP Required: Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5280

Hot Don issues and updates

Rise of the new Don & Lower Don Lands Plan

The Don River is one of Toronto's great assets and the centrepiece of major revitalization initiatives on the waterfront. Toronto and Region Conservation is proceeding with the Environmental Assessment for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project (DMNP Project) on behalf of Waterfront Toronto. Ultimately this project will transform the existing mouth of the Don River into a healthier, more naturalized river outlet to the lake, while at the same time, removing the risk of flooding to urban land to the east and south of the river. This project is a central component of Waterfront Toronto's Lower Don Lands plan.

Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission are undertaking the Lower Don Lands Infrastructure Municipal Class EA Master Plan and the Keating Precinct Plan. The objective of the plan is to create a vibrant, mixed use, sustainable community that embraces and respects a newly naturalized and flood-protected mouth of the Don River. The revitalization plan will include details on the new neighbourhoods, community facilities and public spaces, as well as a Master Plan for transportation, transit, water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

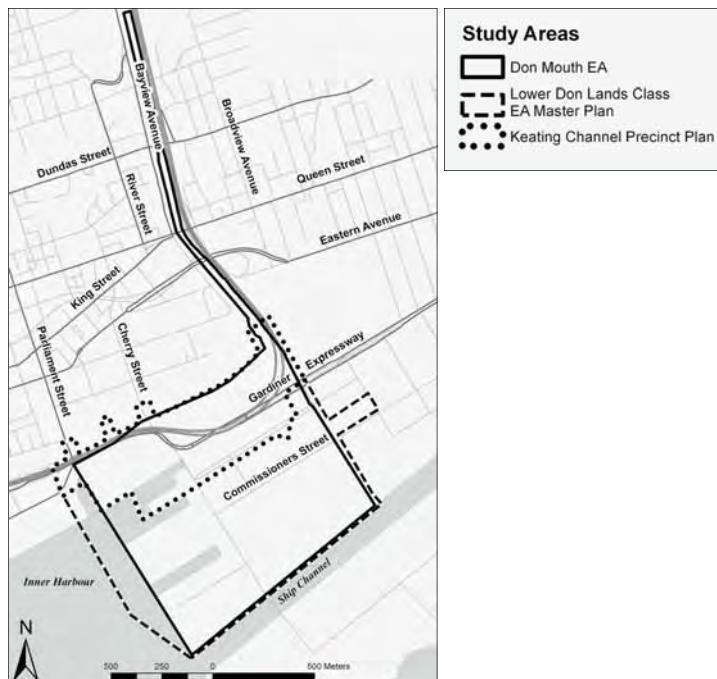
Come attend our open house and view presentations on the Concept Plan for the DMNP Project, and the Master Plan for the Lower Don Lands Infrastructure Municipal Class EA with a focus on the Keating Master Servicing EA and Precinct Plan.

Saturday, May 9, 2009

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Location: St. Lawrence Hall, The Great Hall, 157 King Street East (southwest corner at Jarvis Street)

For more information, contact Michelle Vanderwel at Toronto and Region Conservation at 416-661-6600 ext. 5280 or e-mail at mvanderwel@trca.on.ca for the DMNP EA or Andrea Kelemen at Waterfront Toronto at 416-214-1344 ext. 248 or email at lowerdon@waterfronttoronto.ca for the Lower Don Lands Infrastructure Municipal Class EA and Keating Precinct Plan.



Cleaning Up Our Waterways: The Don River and Central Waterfront Project Wade into the discussion!

The City of Toronto's Don River and Central Waterfront Project brings together the recommendations from the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan for improving water quality in the lower Don River and the Inner Harbour with necessary upgrades to the Don and Waterfront trunk sewer system and its ability to service future growth. Once completed and put into action, this Project will help us to improve water quality, and will be an important step to delisting Toronto's waterfront as an Area of Concern.

In late February, a group of over forty interested stakeholders gathered at the second Public Information Centre to hear about our progress to date, and to offer input on the options being considered for the trunk sewer system and wastewater treatment and how they will be evaluated.

Following a presentation and during table discussions, many suggestions about how to effectively involve the community were offered. Stakeholders advised the City that a watershed management approach and source control solutions were critical. Participants pointed out that the City is experiencing strong development pressure in the study area and must act to ensure that stormwater management is not overlooked as development proceeds.

This summer preliminary solutions will be presented for further public input. Public participation in this study is critical; find out more about it and get involved. If you missed the meeting, it's not too late. Wade in!

- Visit our website at www.toronto.ca/involved to see the materials presented at the recent meeting.
- Add your name to the stakeholder list. Email us at cleanwaterways@toronto.ca or call 416-338-5470. Information will be distributed via e-mail wherever possible.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Native plants found in the Don

1. You can find me blooming in the Don watershed in April.
2. I have a white flower with yellow centre.
3. I have a single broad deeply lobed leaf.
4. My red juice was used as a dye by our native peoples and early pioneers.
5. My flower only lasts a few days.

What species am I?

Answer on page 6.

Other events of interest

WALK AT DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY (DDO)

Saturdays, 2–3 p.m., 123 Hillsvie Drive, Richmond Hill

Join Richmond Hill Naturalists for their interpretive walks at DDO. RSVP required, please email joe.agg@hotmail.com or phone 905-884-5012.

EAST DON PARKLAND PARTNERS WETLAND PLANTING

Saturday, April 18, 2009, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

This is the first of several plantings in the newly renovated wetland just south of the Cummer Ave bridge. Park on the nearby side streets follow the signs and walk south on the park path 200 metres. Bring rubber boots.

DENTON CREEK, GERRARD PRAIRIE AND ROSETTA MCCLAIN GARDENS

Saturday, April 18, 2009, 12:30 p.m.

Discover a long-lost tributary of Taylor-Massey Creek, see prairie, forests and gardens. Leader: John Wilson. A joint walk between Lost Rivers and Taylor Massey Project. Meet in front of Victoria Park subway station.

6TH ANNUAL UNDERWRITERS' CORPORATE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Sunday, April 19, 2009, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Join Underwriters Laboratories of Canada, Cadbury-Adams and Taylor Massey Project for this planting along Taylor-Massey Creek. Rain or shine, please dress appropriately. Meet at Cadbury-Adams at 40 Bertrand, about 250 m west of Birchmount Rd, north of Eglinton Ave E.

YORK CEMETERY – BIRDS WALKS

Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 10 a.m.

Join Toronto Field Naturalists for a birding walk. Meet at the cemetery entrance on Beecroft Rd. at North York Blvd. Bring lunch and binoculars.

TOLL BAR PARK TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Town of Richmond Hill's Parks, Recreation & Culture's planting at Toll Bar Park, Elgin Mills Road & Yonge Street area. Meet at the park entrance off Cooperage Crescent. Equipment will be provided. Please bring drinking water, a hat, sunscreen and a lunch or snack.

CEDARVALE RAVINE CLEAN-UP

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Join Toronto Field Naturalists to help clean up Cedarvale Ravine. Meet at the Heath St. exit of St. Clair West subway. Bring your own work gloves or sturdy rubber gloves. Bags will be provided.

TREES ACROSS TORONTO

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Join the City of Toronto's native tree and shrub planting program. Gloves and shovels are provided. Event runs rain or shine. Some sites are muddy, dress accordingly. Location #1: Earl Bales Park (Enter from Bathurst St.). Location #2: Sun Valley (Take Beechwood Dr. from O'Connor Dr. east of Broadview).

EAST DON TRAIL CLEAN-UP

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

John Toronto Field Naturalists as they clean their way northwest towards Best View Park just south of Steeles Ave. Meet at the northeast entrance to the East Don Trail on Cummer Ave between Bayview Ave. and Leslie St. Bring a pair of thick rubber gloves. Bags will be provided.

EARTH RUN CANADA 5K RUN/WALK

Sunday, April 26, 2009. Run starts at 9 a.m.

The Earth Run Foundation is a charitable organization with a mandate to bring people together toward building a sustainable future. By engaging the private and public sector, they raise awareness and funding for local environmental organizations. To register and for information:

www.earthrun.org/canada/toronto.html

Location: Exhibition Place, Direct Energy Centre.

EARL BALES FAMILY FUN EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Sunday, April 26, 2009, 12–3 p.m.

Toronto Parks' festival featuring an eco fair, hands on nature/environmental activities, movies, guided nature walks and a live animal show. **Location:** Earl Bales Community Centre, 4169 Bathurst St.

EARTH DAY AT TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Sunday, April 26, 2009, 12–4 p.m.

Learn about green gardening and eating locally. Take a guided walk through the gardens and the ravine. Kid's activities in the Children's Centre. Free, no registration required. **Location:** Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Avenue E.

15TH ANNUAL FARLINGER RAVINE NEIGHBOURHOOD CLEAN-UP AND PLANTING

Sunday, April 26, 2009, 2–4 p.m.

All are welcome at this TMP clean-up and tree/shrub planting. Litter bags, gloves, and plants supplied. Contact Janet or Harry at 416-261-4536 for more information or to RSVP for the potluck BBQ after the event. Rain or shine, so please dress appropriately. Enter from Foxridge Dr. off Kennedy Rd., south of Eglinton. Walk north 500 meters to the second bridge.

WARDEN WOODS PLANT-A-TREE-FOR-MOTHER'S-DAY

Saturday, May 9, 2009, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Everyone is welcome to participate in a family planting led by Taylor Massey Project Please bring shovels and pairs of gloves if you can. Rain or shine, so please dress appropriately. Meet in the park just below the stairs at St Clair and Warden Avenues, opposite the Warden subway station.

EAST DON PARKLAND PARTNERS RAIDERS OF THE LOST PARK WILDFLOWER WALK

Saturday, May 9, 2009, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Meet at the Second Cup on Steeles Ave. and Laureleaf Rd. (between Bayview Ave, and Leslie St.). Meet park explorer Ontario Jones and attend his 'Raiders of the Lost Parks' walk.

ANSWER: Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Family Papaveraceae (poppy family)

The generic name, Bloodroot, is from the Latin word sanguis, meaning blood and refers to the red juice of the plant which is found in the root.

Bloodroot blooms from March to May in rich open woods, usually on banks or slopes.

The buds are enfolded in the large leaves to protect them from the cold. The flowers open when the sun shines and close at night. The flowers usually have 8 petals but can have more. Each plant has a single leaf and a single flower on separate stems. The flowers are short-lived but the large leaves remain as a ground cover.

The plant was used by native peoples as a dye for clothing and baskets and as face paint. They called it Puccoon root. It is poisonous and has harmful effects on the skin so don't try this.

Bloodroot can be found in wooded areas in the Don and its tributaries; Taylor Massey Creek, German Mills Creek, Wilket Creek and the East and West Don. The accompanying photo was taken on German Mills Creek in mid-April.

Courtesy of the Toronto Field Naturalists



Photo provided by: Margaret McRae, Toronto Field Naturalists

TAYLOR CREEK TREE PLANTING AT HALSEY

Saturday, May 9, 2009, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Join Friends of the Don East to improve an existing natural area in Taylor Creek Park, along the north bank of the creek. Meet at the main (west) Dawes Road parking lot. Transit access via Dawes 23 from Main Station.

DON VALLEY WALK

Sunday, May 17, 2009, 1 p.m.

Join John Routh for a Lost Rivers Walk. Investigate forests and water features, human and natural. The walk will last two to three hours. Moderate exertion required. Meet at Broadview TTC station.

DOORS OPEN TORONTO AT TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Saturday May 23 and Sunday May 24, 2009, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Explore gardens and LEED certified buildings on this tour. Kid's nature activities. Free. Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Avenue E.

For information on TRCA events and activities, visit www.trca.on.ca/events

On the Don is a newsletter about the Don River watershed and the efforts to rehabilitate its waters and lands. This newsletter is published by Toronto and Region Conservation in partnership with the Don Watershed Regeneration Council.

Toronto and Region Conservation

With over 50 years of experience, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) helps people understand, enjoy and look after the natural environment, for a cleaner, greener and healthier place to live, for you today and for your children tomorrow.

Don Watershed Regeneration Council

The Don Watershed Regeneration Council is a volunteer, watershed-wide advisory committee established by Toronto and Region Conservation in 1994 to help restore the Don River watershed to a healthy, sustainable natural environment.

Please send an email to donlist@trca.on.ca with the message 'subscribe' or 'unsubscribe' if you wish to be added or removed from the *On the Don* mailing list.



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