

On the Don Don

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

Giant Hogweed is in the Don. Here's what you should know:

What is it?

Giant Hogweed is a perennial and biennial flowering plant in the carrot family. Since arriving in Ontario in 1949, it has spread into natural areas and is now classified as an invasive species. It competes with native species for light, and can change the composition and reduce the diversity of native plant communities. Giant Hogweed grows in moist environments, generally near streams, lakes and ponds.

Identification

When mature, Giant Hogweed is a very large plant. It can reach a height of 4 to 5 metres when in flower, and have a stem diameter of 5 to 10 centimetres. When young, it can be much shorter and without flowers. The hairy stem is either purple in colour, or has purple spots. The alternating leaves are dark green, and have coarse teeth and three deep lobes. Leaves near the base of the plant can be over two metres long. Giant Hogweed has small white flowers that are arranged in an umbrella-shaped head. These flower heads can measure 80 centimetres across. A single plant can contain more than 80,000 flowers.

Similar Plants

Giant Hogweed is often mistaken for native species Cow Parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) and Angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*). Cow Parsnip is a shorter plant (only 1 to 3 metres), has smaller flowers and a green stem without any purple. Angelica is also much smaller (1.2 to 2.7 metres) has a rounded-topped flower cluster and leaves divided into many leaflets.

Ecology

Giant Hogweed grows for 3 to 5 years before flowering. Flowering occurs from June to August, at which point the seeds are released. Once the seeds are released the plant dies. Seeds are dispersed by wind, water and humans, and can survive in the soil for seven years. Each plant can release between 20,000 to 100,000 seeds, resulting in high rates of spread.

Toxicity

Giant Hogweed contains a clear, watery, toxic sap. When this sap contacts skin it causes sensitivity to sunlight resulting in a painful burn within 15 minutes of exposure. The extent of reaction depends on the individual, and sensitivity can last for months or years.

What you should do if you find Giant Hogweed...

- DO NOT touch the plant or try to control it yourself - call a pest control expert
- Keep children and pets away from the plant
- Do not cut or pick fresh or dried flower heads (it will spread the seeds)
- Contact the Invading Species Awareness Program hotline 1-800-563-7711 to report the infestation
- Before leaving the natural area, remove seeds and fluff from clothes, pet fur, bike tires, and shoes

What to do if you touch Giant Hogweed

Should you touch Giant Hogweed, wash the affected area immediately with soap and cool water. Avoid sunlight and seek medical attention.

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What is being done

TRCA is working with our partner municipalities to identify infestations and effectively manage them. If Giant Hogweed is identified in public areas or areas near trails, they will be removed.

Additional Resources

Invading Species: Giant Hogweed

www.invadingspecies.com/Invaders.cfm?A=Page&PID=31

Ontario Weeds: Giant Hogweed

www.ontarioweeds.com/weed.php?w=HERMZ

Ministry of Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ontweeds/giant_hogweed.htm



Giant Hogweed

We've paddled, partied and planted our way across the Don this season!

On Sunday May 2, over \$66,000 was raised by paddlers in this year's Paddle the Don. Congratulations to Terrapex Environmental Limited, the winner of this year's Paddle the Don Banrock Station Corporate Canoe Challenge.



EcoAction Grant Gets Kids Outdoors

If you went for a walk, bike or run through the East Don Parkland from May 17 to 20 you may have noticed that the wetland near Cummer Ave. was abuzz with youthful energy. During these four days, over 500 students from local GTA schools planted over 950 wetland plants in a rehabilitated wetland. The students were participating in the Aquatic Plants Program (APP), which aims to increase students' knowledge of wetland ecosystems and the important roles they play in maintaining the ecological health of our region. By growing and transplanting native aquatic plants from seed, and participating in activities, students learned to care for their environment through creating and restoring a local wetland. The planting area has been temporarily fenced off to give it a change to establish itself and the site will be monitored during the summer to gauge the success of the students' planting efforts.

We engaged several passersby in conversation about the restoration work being done on the site. These individuals can now educate their friends and neighbors about the importance of the wetland restoration.

In early June, hundreds of families from the Richmond Hill community enjoyed a fun-filled day overflowing with plenty of environmentally-focused learning opportunities and activities, local food and entertainment at the Mill Pond Splash Eco-Festival.

With funding from EcoAction we were also able to create a new education activity guide. The purpose of the guide is to aid teachers in communicating the importance of local water resources before and after APP field trips.

For inquiries about this project, please contact Natalie Swaak at 416-661-6600 ext. 5765 or nswaak@trca.on.ca.



Only a short few weeks later, over 250 shrubs, wildflowers and wetland plants were planted by the community at the Maple Nature Reserve Quonset Hut site, one of the first regeneration sites from *Beyond Forty Steps* to be tackled. As part of the day's activities, volunteers enjoyed a guided hike along the new trail system. The Maple Nature Reserve is located at 10401 Dufferin Street, Vaughan.



Richmond Hill's Pioneer Park Wins Watershed Award

The Town of Richmond Hill was recently honored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) with the Watershed Award (Ontario Region) for the Town's Pioneer Park Stormwater Management Rehabilitation Project. This award, in its introductory year, recognizes municipalities that have demonstrated leadership in their efforts to adapt to climate change by reducing their vulnerability to flooding and water damage.

The Pioneer Park Stormwater Management Project is a \$6.3 million, multi-disciplinary project, involving the rehabilitation of an existing flood control facility to provide protection to flood vulnerable areas, protect existing infrastructure, enhance erosion control, treat water quality, and stabilize and rehabilitate the East Don River watercourse.

Hot Don issues and updates

Don Mouth Naturalization & Port Lands Flood Protection Project

The Draft Environmental Assessment is done!

Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) and Waterfront Toronto (WT) have completed the near final draft of the Environmental Assessment for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project (DMNP EA). The draft DMNP EA has received endorsement from:

- Waterfront Toronto's Board of Directors on May 5, 2010;
- TRCA's Authority Board on May 21, 2010; and
- City of Toronto's Council Meeting on July 7, 2010.

Following the receipt of endorsement at the July 7 Council Meeting, TRCA released the pre-submission draft of the DMNP EA to the Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE), other agencies, stakeholders and the general public for review and comment.

Once the Provincial EA is officially submitted, TRCA will ensure that hard copies are made available for public review with the City Clerk, and in local neighbourhood library branches. Digital copies of the EA will also be made available for download from the TRCA website, and if requested, CDs/DVDs containing the EA will be made available to the public. The public will have seven weeks to review and provide comments on the documents. The MOE will then have five weeks to issue a Notice of Completion for the Government review, at which time, the public will have five weeks to review the government review. For this second stage of review, the MOE will be responsible for notifications and postings. The Minister will then have thirteen weeks to make a final decision.

For more information, please contact:

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Public open space at the Don River Mouth. Property of Waterfront Toronto

Cleaning Up Our Waterways: Don River and Central Waterfront Project

Project Update Summer 2010

The Don River and Inner Harbour have been plagued by poor water quality largely due to overflows from combined and storm sewers. Each year, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) can happen 20 to 30 times between April and October, depending upon the amount of rainfall.

In 2003, the City approved the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan (WWF MP), a long-term comprehensive plan aimed at solving the negative effects of storm runoff across the City's watersheds. The Plan included recommendations to help capture outfall discharges from combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and storm sewers along the Lower Don, Taylor Massey Creek and Inner Harbour. In early 2008, the City launched the Don River and Central Waterfront project to further the COS-related solutions identified in the WWFMP. Consideration is also being given to any necessary upgrades to the sanitary trunk sewer system to accommodate future growth.

Recently, the Project Team presented an integrated, preliminary solution to improve water quality which includes a series of tunnels and underground storage tanks as well as treatment facilities for wet weather flow in locations throughout the study area. The solution being recommended is intended to: reduce the harmful bacteria, pathogens, heavy metals, oils and pesticides found in our waterways; reduce nutrient levels (phosphorus and nitrogen) that cause excessive algae growth; improve aquatic habitat, fisheries and wildlife habitat; enhance recreation opportunities; bring the Don River and Toronto waterfront closer to conformity with Provincial water quality guidelines; and help support and complement the many projects currently underway to enhance the Don River and our Waterfront.

A series of public open houses and a workshop were held to gain feedback on the preliminary preferred solution. A cross section of new and previously engaged stakeholders visited the PICs and rolled up their sleeves at the workshop. Many of those in attendance expressed support for the overall goals of the Project, while others expressed concerns and posed important questions. All of this feedback is being considered by the Project Team as the Project continues.

For more information on the Project and/or the recent series of public events, please visit www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/cleanwaterways or call 416-338-5470.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Geology of the Don

1. I form the headwaters of the Don watershed as well as many other watersheds across the GTA and beyond.
2. I am made up largely of sand and gravel.
3. I'm very sensitive ... environmentally, that is.

What am I?

Answer on page 4.

Answer: Oak Ridges Moraine

The Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) is a prominent geological landform located just north of the City of Toronto, stretching as a ridge of hilly terrain 160 kilometers from the Trent River to the Niagara Escarpment. It forms a divide between waters flowing south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe, Rice Lake and Georgian Bay.

The Moraine was created 13,000 years ago as glaciers receded and deposited layers of sand and gravel. Often referred to as the "rain barrel of Southern Ontario", the Moraine acts as an important recharge/discharge area for a number of watercourses in the region. Precipitation is collected and stored in the Moraine's vast underground layers of sand and gravel, known as aquifers. This water eventually resurfaces as healthy, clean water and feeds the majority of river systems in the Greater Toronto Area including the Don River.

In 2001, the Ontario Government consulted widely on the future of the ORM and the complex land issues involved. The outcome was the creation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act (2001) and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002) whose primary purpose was to provide land use and resource management planning direction to decision makers, landowners and other stakeholders on how to protect the Moraine's ecological and hydrological features and functions.

As part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan every upper-tier municipality and single-tier municipality were required to prepare a watershed plan for watersheds whose streams originate within their municipality. The objectives and requirements of each watershed plan were then to be incorporated into the municipality's official plan. In 2009, TRCA, in consultation with municipal partners and the Don Watershed Regeneration Council (DWRC) developed the Don River Watershed Plan *Beyond Forty Steps*. The Plan has since been approved by all Don watershed municipalities. It can be found at <http://www.trca.on.ca/donwatershedplan/>



Oak Ridges Moraine

Credit: Image courtesy of Conservation Authorities Moraine Coalition and Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Don watershed events

TRCA Events

CARING FOR YOUR TREES AND SHRUBS

Wednesday, September 22, 2010, 7p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Maple Library (In the Maple Community Centre)

10190 Keele St., Vaughan

Join TRCA and hear expert advice on planting, pruning, watering and feeding fruit and shade trees, as well as shrubs.

Register for this **FREE** workshop at:

<http://www.trcastewardshipevents.ca/registration.php?eid=97>

or contact the Healthy Yards Hotline at 416-661-6600 ext. 5741

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

Other Events

GREEN BUILDING FESTIVAL

Thursday, September 23 to Friday September 24, 2010

Direct Energy Centre, Toronto, ON

Visit www.greenbuildingfest.com for more information.

EVERGREEN BRICK WORKS GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

September 24, 2010 to September 26, 2010

Plan to join Evergreen in celebration of the grand opening of Evergreen Brick Works! We'll have fabulous food, tours of the historic heritage buildings and festivities all weekend long. Help us kick off this new chapter in creating more sustainable cities. Stay tuned for more info!

Visit www.ebw.evergreen.ca for more information

For all other local events, see

City of Toronto Stewardship

<http://www.toronto.ca/greentoronto/>

City of Vaughan

<http://www.city.vaughan.on.ca/>

East Don Parkland Partners

www.facebook.com/edonpp

Evergreen Brick Works

<http://ebw.evergreen.ca/whats-on/>

Friends of the Don East (FODE)

<http://web.ca/~fode/calendar.htm>

Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF)

<http://www.yourleaf.org/events>

Richmond Hill Naturalists

<http://www.rhnaturalists.ca/events/>

Task Force to Bring Back the Don

<http://www.toronto.ca/don/treeplanting.htm>

The Taylor Massey Project (TMP)

<http://www.thetmp.org/calendar.htm>

Thirsty City Walks

<http://www.thirstycitywalks.ca/news>

Toronto Botanical Gardens

<http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca>

Toronto Bruce Trail Club

<https://media6.magma.ca>

Toronto Field Naturalists

www.torontofieldnaturalists.org

Toronto Green Community

<http://torontogreen.ca>

Town of Markham

<http://www.markham.ca>

Town of Richmond Hill

<http://www.town.richmond-hill.on.ca>

York Region

<http://www.york.ca/Calendars>

York Region Environmental Alliance

<http://www.yrea.org/calendar.html>



Member of Conservation Ontario

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 1995 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.