



We hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful summer break! Maybe you had a chance to do a bit of camping or hiking or just spent some time enjoying a few native berries. We look forward to resuming our monthly membership meetings and beginning our fall native planting along the Champlain Heights Trail system.

## Propagation Project

by Grace Nombrado



In late spring and into the summer, Free the Fern member, Teresa Gagné, helped to spearhead a softwood plant propagation project. Seven Free the Fern members worked together along the Champlain Heights Trail system to pot 17 softwood cuttings. Native plants being tested include: salal, trailing blackberry, red flowering

currant, Pacific ninebark, orange honeysuckle and others. Each member will be monitoring and caring for 2-3 pots of softwood cuttings.

## **Steps of Softwood Propagation:**

Note: It is best to collect softwood cuttings during the cool morning hours of late spring.

*On the trail:*

1. Find a softwood stem on a plant with green, younger leaves. The stem should be soft and flexible.
2. Using freshly washed shears or scissors, cut the base of the stem in a diagonal cut, creating a cutting about 2-5" in size. Make sure there are approximately 3 nodes on the stem (nodes are where the leaves join the stem)
3. Collect the cuttings in a bucket containing several inches of water

*Once you get home:*

1. Mix 50/50 mix of peat and sand
2. Place soil in 1 Gal pots
3. Using a watering can, saturate the soil in the pots
4. Using shears or scissors, remove the third leaf, or the one on growing from the lowest node of your cutting
5. Dip the cutting in rooting solution or powder
6. Tap off excess rooting solution
7. Plant the softwood cutting in the 1 Gal pot. Make sure to bury the base of the cutting and the third node (where you cut off the last leaf) with soil. You can plant 2-3 small cuttings in a single pot.
8. Cover the pot and plant with a clear plastic bag that has been punctured with several small holes. This bag will help to preserve humidity, while the holes allow for ventilation and reduce mildew.
9. Place the pot outside in a cool, shady location until the cutting roots (you will know that the plant is rooting when you notice plant growth)
10. Check frequently to water and maintain moisture in the soil

*In the fall:*

1. Transplant the 2-3 cuttings out of the original pot and into each of their own pots. You can add potting soil or other soil at this time.
2. Leave plants outside in a semi-shaded spot

3. Plants should be ready to transplant into the garden by the following spring

## Fall Planting

In addition to our plant propagation project, Free the Fern members are also planning several fall planting events.

**We are looking for volunteers to help.** See below for specific numbers of volunteers needed for each event. Please reach out to us if you are able to help.



### Cartier Place Mini Planting

**1-2 volunteers needed**

**Friday, September 17, 2021**

**1:30pm-3:30pm**

by **Martin Collins**

A portion (\$175) of our Art for Plants Fundraiser will be used to fund a small planting along Red Alder Trail, in the area between Cartier Place and the new forest playground. Over the past several months, the area had been cleared of ivy and

blackberry by a local resident of Cartier Place, Ann Hamm. We will be planting a mix of: Douglas Fir, salal, red flowering currant, mock orange, and oceanspray.

## Alexander Laidlaw Planting

3 volunteers needed

Saturday, September 18, 2021 & Saturday, November 6, 2021

10am-12pm

by Martin Collins

In May 2021, a group of 10 local citizens, primarily from **Alexander Laidlaw and Le Coeur Co-ops**, assisted with clearing a large area of invasive blackberry. Thanks to a Neighbourhood Small Grant (\$500) and Free the Fern Art for Plant Fundraiser (\$335), most volunteers will be returning for two fall planting events. The first event will be held on **Saturday, September 18, 2021** (tentative date). Douglas fir trees, Oregon grape and sword fern would be the principal plantings. The second event, which will coincide with a major plant delivery from Nat's Nursery in late October, is anticipated to be held on **November 6, 2021**.

## Native Plant Teaching Garden

6 volunteer leaders needed

10 or more public planting volunteers needed (all ages welcome)

Sunday, October 24, 2021

10am-12pm

by Grace Nombrado

Thanks to a [TD Park People Grant](#) and our [Art for Plant Fundraiser](#), we have placed a major order with Nat's Nursery for over \$1000 worth of plants. We are excited to be able to create a long-anticipated **Native Plant Teaching Garden** behind **Kinross Creek Co-op**. This public event will take place on **Sunday, October 24, 2021 from 10am-12pm** (tentative date dependent on Nat's order pickup confirmation). We will be planting berries (e.g. huckleberry, blackberry, and salal), flowers (e.g. bleeding heart, red columbine, and false solomon's seal) and ferns (e.g. deer fern, sword fern, and spiny wood fern). At the same time, we will also be planting some ferns, thimbleberries, and woolly sunflower, at an adjacent plot behind **Cartier Place**.

# Rising Youth Grant

No more volunteers required

Date TBD

by [Damian Assadi](#)

This summer, I received approval for a [#RisingYouth community service grant](#) to support community parks and greenways. For Free the Fern, these funds will go towards purchasing a **walk-in greenhouse** and **native plants for Plot J** (which is next to Doug's Garden and Kinross Creek Co-op). Plants will include salal, sword fern, vine maple, and osoberry. The greenhouse can be used to support further native plant propagation. I am organizing details for a youth planting, so keep an eye out for these upcoming plantings in the fall!

Please reach out to [freethefern@gmail.com](mailto:freethefern@gmail.com) to volunteer for our planting events.

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THIS MONTH'S  
OTHER STORIES

## Indigenous Plant Walk

by [Grace Nombrado](#)



Due to air quality issues from forest fire smoke, our [Indigenous Plant Walk](#), which was originally scheduled for August, has been rescheduled for **September 11, 2021** from **10-11:30am**. The walk, funded by a [Neighbourhood Small Grant](#), will be led by

Lori Snyder, Métis herbalist and educator, and take place at Champlain Heights Park. There are still a few spaces available for those interested to attend. Email [freethefern@gmail.com](mailto:freethefern@gmail.com) to register. Free the Fern member, Kiki Nombrado, will also be filming and editing a video version for those who cannot attend in person.



## Free the Fern Lending Library

by Grace Nombrado



This month we will be launching a **Free the Fern Lending Library**. Members are welcome to borrow books for up to a 3 week loan. Books include bestelling titles, such as *Finding the Mother Tree*, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, *The Hidden Life of Trees* (Illustrated Edition) and *The Golden Spruce*, as well as useful references on native plants and birds. To see our complete catalogue or make a loan request, please email [freethefern@gmail.com](mailto:freethefern@gmail.com). In addition, if you have any books relating to local ecology or indigenous knowledge that you would like to donate to our library, we would be most grateful.

## Tick Talk

by Grace Nombrado

A reminder that we live along a forested area where ticks are present. A week ago I discovered one crawling on my clothing after returning from a walk along the Champlain Heights Trail. It was a male western black-legged tick. I luckily identified and disposed of it before it could bite me.

Some local resources on ticks:

[Ticks in British Columbia](#)

[Lyme Disease](#)

[How to avoid and remove ticks](#)

## Recommended Viewing



Buzz Feed News recently featured the following [video](#) with the San Francisco nonprofit, [@SFinBloom](#). Founders, Shalaco and Phoenix, share how you can use a

parmesan cheese grater to sprinkle native wildflower seeds in your neighbourhood. I could see this being a fun activity for kids at school or people walking throughout the neighbourhood. I appreciate how they emphasize the importance of selecting flower seeds that are native to the area and being careful not to introduce invasive weeds. @SFinBloom also offers workshops and resources on their [website](#).

## Next Meeting

**Free the Fern's next monthly members meeting** will be held via Zoom on:

**Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 7-8pm.**

A reminder and link will be sent out to members closer to the date.

[\*\*READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE\*\*](#)



Free the Fern.

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