



Free the Fern March 2023 Newsletter

Signs of Spring

It is the tail-end of February, and we have just been surprised with a sudden dump of snow. Despite the frigid temperatures, there are signs that Spring is just around the corner.



The first sign is the pale green buds forming on the evergreen huckleberry. The buds stand out on their bright pink stems, promising of delicious berries to come in the summer.



Meanwhile, we see the bright green leaves of the Pacific bleeding heart popping up from beneath the leaf mulch in the trail. In the winter this plant dies back, so its sudden reappearance seems a near miracle of nature.



As we walk further down the trail, we find large bushes of Indigenous Plum or Osoberry covered with bright green buds. In a few weeks these buds will burst into a cascade of white flowers. By late spring, the flowers will transform into deep purple edible plums that are enjoyed by birds and people alike.



Over the last week, we have also seen large flocks of robins visiting our stewardship area along the Red Alder trail. The robins have been feeding on the bugs and worms hiding beneath the leaf litter. Check out a video here:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CpEjFciLyKP/?hl=en>

Keep an eye out and see if you can find any other signs of spring along the trails.

THIS MONTH'S
TOP STORIES



Invasive Pull - March 4, 2023

After a [successful pull in February](#) (pictured above), we are excited to gather again on **Saturday, March 4, 2023 from 10am-12pm**. Volunteers will be meeting at the [Douglas Fir Teaching Garden](#) and then moving down the trail to remove invasive Himalayan blackberry and ivy from our future [Native Food Forest](#) site.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to [sign up here](#)

We will provide gloves, tools, and refreshments. Look forward to seeing many new faces then!

This event has been made possible thanks to funding from the City of Vancouver [Neighbourhood Matching Fund](#).



Ivy Weaving Workshop - March 11, 2023

On **Saturday, March 11, 2022, 10am-12pm & 1-3pm**, Free the Fern will be hosting an **Ivy Weaving Workshop** (19+). Learn how to gather, prepare, and weave ivy into a handmade basket. This workshop will be a mix of outdoor and indoor, as it will be hosted at Kinross Creek Co-op common room. You may [sign up to attend here](#).

This workshop has been made possible thanks to funding from the City of Vancouver [Neighbourhood Matching Fund](#).



Wildlife-friendly Habitat

On February 22, 2023 the Free the Fern [Douglas Fir Teaching Garden](#) was acknowledged by the [Canadian Wildlife Federation](#) as a Wildlife-friendly Habitat. The Douglas Fir Garden provides a suitable habitat for local and migratory wildlife, some of which may be species at risk. Wildlife-friendly features of our garden include: food (nectar/pollen from flowers, berries from plants, seeds left on plants, foliage/twigs), water (mud puddling area for butterflies), and shelter (ground cover, leaf litter, host plants for caterpillars, evergreen & deciduous trees/shrubs, and brush piles). As more land is developed for human activities, each wildlife-friendly garden, such as the Douglas Fir Teaching Garden, acts as a stepping stone between larger areas of habitat, essential for many species' survival.



Public Outreach Session

On **Thursday, February 9, at 7pm**, we had the first in our series of 10 [Native Food Forest events](#): a **Public Outreach Session** via Zoom. The intention of the session was to answer the following questions:

1. What is a native food forest?
2. Where will it be planted?
3. Who will it benefit?
4. How can I get involved?

The 8 participants present asked thoughtful questions about our project, such as: “are kids welcome?”, “how do you protect the soil’s health before and after planting?” and “how do you protect the area from dogs?”

You can find answers to these questions on our [powerpoint and meeting minutes here](#).



Everett Crowley Park Committee

If you are eager to volunteer at other invasive pulls in our neighbourhood, [Everett Crowley Park Committee](#), organizes monthly invasive pull events. Their next scheduled pull is:

March 25, 2023, 10am-12:30pm You can [register online](#) or contact ecpcstewards@gmail.com to inquire.

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