



## WINTER 2022 Newsletter

*"People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world that will not sustain people."*

*- Bryce Nelson*

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT RIVERVIEW

- Great turnout at the last tree tour on Oct 17th, 2021. Over 100 enthusiastic supporters came to hear Doug Justice give an amazing two-hour tour of the unique tree collection on the Riverview grounds.
- RHCS plans to refurbish our information kiosk on the grounds by Crease Clinic. We are in the process of obtaining approval from BC Housing (BCH), the government body in charge of Riverview development plans.
- We must renew our annual license with BCH by Feb. 28 in order to continue to hold tree walks and to work in Serenity Garden this year.
- In an assessment done by Diamond Head Consulting, the arborist company hired by BCH, the removal of 12 trees near Lougheed Highway was recommended. Three of these trees will be removed soon. RHCS asked an arborist for an independent opinion. He did not dispute the removal of these trees.
- RHCS is looking for information from the public Advisory Group (PAG) which was created by BCH to gather information and ideas about the future of the Riverview Lands. Feel free to contact your MLA and/or the Minister of Housing, David Eby, for an update from this public committee.



Shed at Serenity Gardens



Greenhouses at Serenity Gardens





## A TREE TO ADMIRE

Have you curiously admired the number of seemingly stunted, broad, and flat headed trees on the lands of Riverview, or taken the opportunity to stand underneath their diminutive canopy, perhaps on a tree tour?

The Camperdown Elm was developed when a mutated branch of an elm tree was discovered around 1835-1840 growing in the forest in Dundee, Scotland by the Earl of Camperdown's head forester, David Taylor. He transplanted the branch onto the trunk of a normal elm tree within the gardens of Camperdown House, where it still stands. Later, he grafted branches of it to other elms, producing the Camperdown weeping elm cultivar.

The Camperdown Elm (*Ulmus glabra Camperdownii*) is a dome-shaped, weeping elm tree with beautifully contorted branches and dense, glossy green foliage. The branches drape down to the ground if left unpruned. The tree only grows to about 25 feet tall but can spread even wider than its height. The beautifully twisted branches are visible in the winter when the tree is without leaves. *səmiqʷə?elə*/Riverview is home to the largest collection of Camperdown elms in British Columbia.



*Camperdown Elm in Spring*



*Camperdown Elm in Winter*

## THE ROOTS OF THE ARBORETUM

In 1911 John Davidson, who had been working in the Botany Museum at the University of Aberdeen, emigrated to Vancouver and was hired as British Columbia's Provincial Botanist by Henry Esson Young to develop the first true botanical garden in Canada. Work began immediately with plant specimens arriving in great numbers from as far away as California and Kew Gardens in London.

Originally named Essondale, the location of the botanical garden had only been a temporary arrangement and in 1916 John Davidson moved the collection of plants and shrubs, now numbering 26,000, to a permanent site at the newly formed University of British Columbia, leaving behind the trees that were by then too well established, and thus the arboretum, a collection of trees from all over the world, remained.

With the departure of John Davidson to the UBC faculty, landscaping at Essondale continued under head gardener Jack **Renton**, and it was he who designed the grounds around each new building to resemble those of an English country estate. Today there are more than 1,800 trees on these lands that make up this magnificent treasure.



*Inside a Camperdown Elm*



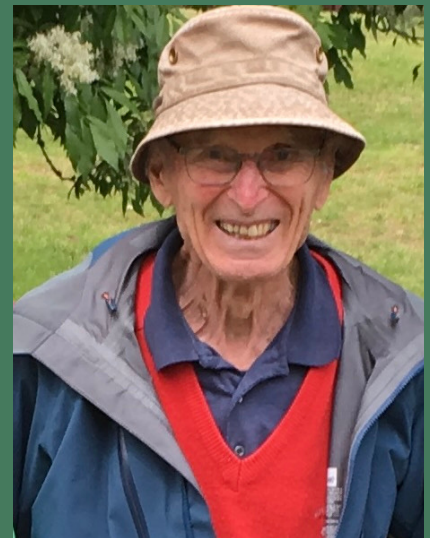


## IN REMEMBRANCE...

Don Gillespie and Mary Brown, two long-time volunteers and Board members of RHCS, passed away in 2021. They will be missed by many, and we send sincere condolences from the RHCS to their families.

Don Gillespie was a strong advocate for Riverview Hospital which he wanted to see fully restored for mental health care. He assisted his wife Norma and the RHCS for nearly three decades. In the 1990s, Don and Norma saw that Finnie's Garden, an area of approx. 2.5 acres on the uphill side of the Riverview property, had become overgrown due to neglect. With a small band of volunteers, they worked each year to remove overgrown brambles and replace them with native plants. Thanks to their efforts, Finnie's Garden won the City of Coquitlam's "Naturescape Award" in 2001 as an outstanding example of a garden showcasing the native flora of BC. Don also built trails through Riverview's "backyard" areas which offer visitors walks through beautiful woodlands. Don passed away peacefully on June 13, 2021 at the age of 90.

Mary Brown, a public Health Nurse, joined the RHCS a few years after it was formed in 1992, and began by helping with Treefest, the annual celebration of trees which RHCS ran every year for 25 years. Mary also served on the RHCS Board for many years. She enjoyed organizing the many Tree Tours that were held every year, booking the arborists who led the Tours, making sure visitors signed in, and looking after many other details such as delivering posters to advertise the Walks. She became knowledgeable about the trees at Riverview and watched their progress closely. Even after moving to a seniors' centre this past summer, Mary attended the Tree Tours in August, September, and October. She passed away suddenly on Christmas Eve at the age of 87.



*Don Gillespie at a Tree Walk, 2019*



*Mary Brown at the RHCS Christmas Party, 2021*

## ACTION UPDATE

RHCS has been advocating for 30 years for the preservation of the trees and supporting mental health. The following statement by a founding member of RHCS, is still true 20 years later!

"One of the greatest threats to success in achieving our vision is public apathy and ignorance. Now, more than ever, we need our members to demonstrate their support by visiting the site, discussing the issues with friends and colleagues, and watching local papers for developments. Consider becoming active in the Society by... sharing your ideas for the future. Most important, write, email, or call the news media and your political representatives. Democracy can work in such cases. Your opinion is important." Sue Haberber, RHCS Director of Political Affairs, August 2002

Today with an increased awareness of the value of the land and parks, we need to preserve Riverview as it is. According to Christopher Nardi, in the Vancouver Sun, the Federal government is mandating the establishment of " 'at least' one new national urban park in the 13 provinces and territories as quickly as possible 'to ensure all Canadians have access to green space.' " (Saturday, December 18th, 2021 NP3) Riverview can easily be an urban park with its history, walking trails and magnificent trees.

## MEMBER FEEDBACK

Send us your thoughts, suggestions, and any responses from your MLA's actions to [riverviewRHCS@outlook.com](mailto:riverviewRHCS@outlook.com)