

# Restoring Your Regional Parks



May 2003

## Information Sheet #1

### Mill Hill Regional Park Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration Project

You may have noticed some changes on Mill Hill in the past few months. That's because CRD Parks has initiated a project to restore the park's degraded Garry oak ecosystems. We began in November 2002 by cutting and removing 5.5 metric tonnes of Scotch broom and daphne – invasive plant species – from approximately 1.7 hectares.

The Garry oak ecosystem is one of Canada's richest and most endangered. These fragile and rare environments only occur on southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and a couple of locations in mainland British Columbia. It is estimated that a mere 5% of the original land area of this ecosystem is left in the province. If you've climbed Mill Hill in the spring you've seen the fantastic display of wildflowers under the Garry oak and arbutus trees – blue camas, spring gold, shooting star and satin flower, just to name a few. Now that Scotch broom has been cut and removed in places, this lovely spring display is even more spectacular.

Scotch broom is an abundant and vigorous invader of Garry oak ecosystems. It produces thousands of seeds every year that lie dormant in the soil, waiting for the right conditions to germinate. Even though CRD Parks staff have removed the visible broom, we know it is not gone. With increased light to the ground surface, seeds in the soil will be stimulated to grow. That's why we have a plan!

The restoration of Mill Hill Regional Park's Garry oak ecosystems is a long-term project. Not only do we plan to remove mature Scotch broom and daphne from other areas in the park this fall, but we plan to remove germinating broom seeds before new plants are old enough to flower.

In the future, CRD Parks hopes to involve the help of volunteers. If you would like to help in our challenge to restore the ecosystems of Mill Hill Regional Park, please contact us.

Your interest and cooperation are much appreciated.



*We are tracking the success of the restoration project using a process called photopoint monitoring. The photos above show the same site before and after Scotch broom removal.*



*Mill Hill is home to several rare wildflowers and a butterfly. Some rare wildflowers grow on the trail edge.*

Photo by Dave Polster

The best way for you to contribute to this restoration project is by staying on designated trails. Please also keep pets on the trails.



Shooting Star and Camas

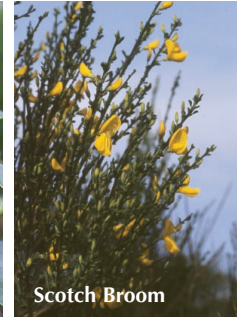
Photo by Jim Rutter

*It's all in how and when you do it. Pulling large broom plants in sensitive habitats can cause damage to thin soils and wildflowers. CRD Parks has researched the best methods and time*

*of year for removing broom. If you would like to help, it is important to contact CRD Parks first. Please call us at 478-3344.*



Daphne



Scotch Broom

Photo by Carina Maslovat

*Everyone knows what Scotch broom looks like, and most people know it poses a threat to natural areas. But did you know the plant called Daphne laureola is not a native shrub? Many people think it is a wild rhododendron. Actually, it's an escaped garden shrub that is infiltrating many natural habitats, including the Garry oak ecosystems of Mill Hill. Most parts of the plant are toxic to humans, from berries to roots!*



Camas

*We have developed a restoration plan in cooperation with several government, non-government and academic institutions. The mandate of CRD Parks is to protect the natural environment.*



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**Thank you for your interest in CRD Parks!**