

## Exploring Preventative Health Care at the Ferguson Forest Centre

Article by Katharine Church, photo by Ivan Russell Reference Fall 2012 Newsletter



Dr. Shawn Yakimovich of the Kemptville Naturopathic Clinic.

There is more to preventative health care than focusing on what you do to, or put into your body. This message was relayed to a group of eager hikers by Dr. Shawn Yakimovich ND during an educational walk hosted by the Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre on Saturday August 25<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Yakimovich, who is a naturopathic doctor at the Kemptville Naturopathic Clinic, led an exploration of the medicinal plants that can be found in the Ferguson Forest, as well as our own backyards. The abundance of medicinal plants in the area was illustrated by the fact that we spent the first ten minutes discussing the medicinal plants found in the parking lot! Dr.

Yakimovich made it very clear that although many common medicinal plants can be used safely, it is important to consult your health care provider prior to using herbal medicine to make sure there are no harmful drug or disease interactions.

While discussing the medicinal properties of common lawn weeds such as dandelions, Dr Yakimovich pointed out that one should be certain that they have not been treated with pesticides or other harmful chemicals. Minimizing our exposure to harmful toxins is one significant component of preventative health care. As you develop your new health care strategy, remember that physical activity should be a pillar in the strategy. According to Dr. Yakimovich, ongoing research in Japan suggests that regular walks through the forest deliver significant benefits to our immune systems as we inhale beneficial essential oils and plant chemicals that are released into the air by the trees in the forest. It turns out that a stroll through the forest really is essential for a healthy mind, body and soul!

Dr. Yakimovich's walk through the forest with the Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre introduced the Friends to a whole new dimension of the forest centre. It was truly amazing to learn about the complexity and healing powers of the plants which we have been walking by every day!

If you would like to share some knowledge that you have of the Ferguson Forest Centre or you have a suggestion for an educational walk, please send us an email at

[executives@friendsofthefergusonforest.ca](mailto:executives@friendsofthefergusonforest.ca)

*Dr. Shawn Yakimovich is a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND) practicing in Kemptville. Naturopathic doctors receive eight years of post-secondary education, including four years of naturopathic medical training. NDs use diet and clinical nutrition, herbal medicine, homeopathic medicine and acupuncture to treat disease and restore health.*