

Chair's Comments

Board thanks Ivan Russell

The board thanks outgoing director Ivan Russell for six years of excellent service to the Friends. We were fortunate to have you oversee our membership activities. You rarely missed a meeting and volunteered significant time between meetings to Friends work. We have benefited from your good ideas, intelligence, grace, integrity, common sense, wisdom and experience over the years. Your dedication to giving the Friends a voice and a presence in the community has been invaluable. Your willingness to show up at Friends events to take pictures and detailed notes for our newsletter articles and Facebook campaigns, and occasionally act as traffic director, made a great difference. You were a partner we could count on. In all you did, you were a good role model for new board members. We thank you for your example and for all you brought to the board and the Friends. It was a pleasure to serve with you. Your outgoing personality, hearty laugh, and wonderful sense of humour will be missed. As you move on, we bid you farewell and wish you good luck in all that comes your way in the future. May the forest be with you.

— *Liza Duhaime, chair of the board of directors, Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre*

Friends Elect New Board

At the annual general meeting on Oct. 21, 2015, Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre members reelected the following board of directors: Liza Duhaime, Jim Beckett, William Wallace, Monica Wallace and Jane Hunt, and said goodbye to outgoing board member Ivan Russell. Continuing with the board for the second year of their terms are Catherine Woolham, Karen Nash, Jeslyn Thibedeau and Todd MacDonald. Joanne Joyce Labossiere was elected as new member of the board. For personal reasons, Karen Nash has since stepped down from the board. The board thanks Karen for her time of service as a director. Karen was a valued board member and contributed greatly to the work of the Friends. The board is seeking a member to fill the vacancy until the next AGM. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors please send an email to board chair Liza Duhaime, chair-fffc@outlook.com.

2nd Annual Photography Competition

Community members are invited to share their original photographs of Ferguson Forest Centre. 2016 contest categories are flora and fauna. Entrants can submit their photos to friendsoffergusonforest@gmail.com under either Youth category (up to age 14) or General category. Entries will be displayed and voted on at the AGM in October.

Gifts from the Giving Garden

The Giving Garden in Ferguson Forest Centre off County Road 43 has been doing just that for almost six years — giving fresh, organically-grown vegetables to area residents seven days a

week all summer long. Clients of the Salvation Army Food Bank also benefit from a weekly delivery of assorted produce during the

garden's growing season. A wide variety of unusual, beautiful flowers adds to the garden's bounty. Long-time North Grenville resident Terry McEvoy was the brainchild behind the community garden. Since his untimely passing in 2009, his wife and a small group of dedicated volunteers have worked tirelessly to make Terry's dream a reality. The hard-working garden committee of Vic and Linda Des Roches, Michelle McEvoy, Don Munz, Carmen Pincott, and Bill and Kathy Paterson are ably supported by Ferguson Forest Centre chief operating officer Ed Patchell and his crew, who generously supply the critical water needs of the garden during the growing season. Because this is a community project, volunteers are welcomed with open arms! No prior experience required, no maximum or minimum age limit, just a willingness to dig in the dirt, plant, weed, harvest, compost and clean up. If you need fresh vegetables, stop by and harvest the produce, or collect some to pass on as a gift. All are welcome to take home and enjoy the flowers and vegetables that are there for the picking at the Giving Garden.

— *By Lou Munz*



Plans Underway for Education & Activity Centre

The board of directors of the Ferguson Forest Centre Corporation is developing a long term plan for an integrated education and activity centre that links the existing Turtle Trail, Anniversary Park and Arboretum. This centre will improve upon what currently exists and will be for public use and enjoyment. It will showcase native plants and also support recreational activities for all ages. A committee has been formed to develop the plan and seek funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The staff of the Ferguson Forest Centre has already done a great deal of work in the designated area but there is still much more to be done. The committee has generated ideas for the area such as wheelchair access from Anniversary Park to the Adam Shewchuk Sugar Maple Grove, a meditation area, bird sanctuary, parking area and running track with exercise stations. The committee also sought input from the community at two public forums. There was an outpouring of support along with suggestions, which included educational and directional signage, a dog park, toboggan hill and groomed ski trails.

The difficult work of prioritizing and costing out the selected suggestions will soon begin. If Trillium funding is forthcoming, we must then decide what can be done with the money available. This is the start of a long term project, which will see the development of this area for years to come for the enjoyment of our community. This project is a very high priority for the board as it will bring visibility to the Forest and a source of pride to the community. We will need the support of the municipality, citizens and "Friends" in making this project a reality.

– By Carl Doucette, vice-president of the board of directors, Ferguson Forest Centre Corporation

Events

Bird Walk, Saturday, May 14

Join us for a walk along Turtle Trail to spot resident and migrating birds. The walk will be led by Dave Moore of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and will leave from Anniversary Park at 9AM. Visit <http://bit.ly/1NDIn3P> for directions to Anniversary Park and Turtle Trail.

Astronomy Night, Friday, June 3

Give us five minutes & we'll give you Saturn!
Saturn is closest, brightest, opposite the sun on June 3. Join us @ 8PM in Ferguson Forest Centre for a telescopic view of the ringed planet and its moons.

Medicinal Herb Walk, Sunday, July 24

Join the Friends and Dr. Shawn Yakimovich for our much-loved annual walk through Ferguson Forest. Promises to be an interesting and educational event!

Other events in 2016 still pending (dates TBD) include:

Foraging (edible wilds), Canoe/Kayak Outing, Horseback Riding, Tree Identification, Forest Walking/Meditation & Orienteering.

RIP Peaches the Greenhouse Cat

The calico cat that greeted people has been laid to rest at the nursery she made her home

Ferguson Forest Centre's beloved cat Peaches was lost in a sudden accident on Oct. 30, 2015. She was less than five years old. From wild barn cat to Ferguson Forest Centre VIP (very important pet), the long-haired calico was not only loved by staff, but by customers visiting the greenhouses. She joined the Ferguson Forest Centre staff in 2012 as the official resident cat, but her primary job description was to catch mice. She was also known for chillaxing on the job, meeting and greeting visitors and sunning in the parking lot. Peaches made herself comfortable from the start, and was allowed to roam the grounds. She was once taken from the property by a concerned citizen who assumed she was



abandoned or unwanted. "She was looked after by Ferguson staff," said Penny Lennox, FFC operations manager. "Peaches was approachable and friendly but out on her own, so someone decided to take her home." According to Lennox, it took every effort to retrieve her. Peaches is home for good now. Her remains reside in a box under a memorial at the nursery. "She was an amazing employee of Ferguson Forest Centre, with her lovable, sweet and sassy personality and her ability to make everyone smile," Lennox said. "She will be sorely missed."

– By Liza Duhaime, chair of the board of directors, Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre

Raptors in Ferguson! Saturday, July 23

The Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre in partnership with the Canadian Raptor Conservancy are bringing an incredible, free-flight demonstration of nature's flying hunters to the Arboretum located at Ferguson Forest Centre. A big thank you to Ferguson Forest Centre Corporation for sponsoring this event! Save the date, more details to follow soon.





Those of you who have walked in the “back forty” of the Ferguson Forest Centre may have noticed a fenced-in field with a big sign “Eastern Ontario Butternut Archive.” The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry provides this space as a “partner in conservation” for the endangered butternut tree and the FFC mows the space and, as necessary, sprays the grafted trees for insect control. The 8 foot high fence around the perimeter of the archive ensures the valuable grafts are not browsed or rubbed by deer.

The Butternut Recovery Program

The Forest Gene Conservation Association manages the archive at FFC as well as two others in central and southern Ontario. They also fund the collection and grafting of cuttings from healthy butternut trees to be added to the archive. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority manages the seed collection and seedling distribution of the pure butternut seedlings grown at the FFC as well as the landowner outreach program for butternut.



Butternut canker

The butternut species is threatened by a fungal disease known as “butternut canker.” This fungus kills the inner bark which disrupts the flow of water and nutrients to all parts of the tree and the tree eventually dies. Butternut canker disease has infected almost all of the Butternut trees across the entire North American range. Butternuts were officially listed as endangered on federal lands in 2005 under Canada’s Species at Risk Act and on all other lands in Ontario in 2008 under the Endangered Species Act.

There is no known cure for the canker and infection rates are very high in most areas. A small percentage of individual trees appear to have a natural tolerance to the disease and may be able to survive for many years. The recovery program is searching the woodlots of Ontario for these trees to collect seeds and produce seedlings for planting replacements for dead butternuts. Some of these butternuts may be genetically tolerant to the canker so they are being cloned and kept in the archive. There are three main archives (including the one at FFC) and two satellite archives in Ontario with hundreds of grafts from trees across Ontario that are showing strong signs of disease tolerance.

Landowners are encouraged to participate in this program. The program is concentrating on the pure, native species rather than the exotic walnuts and hybrids that are also available.

What can you do with a butternut tree?

Butternut is fairly common in eastern Ontario. This tree is also called the “white walnut” and can easily be confused with the black walnut tree. The Butternut nuts can be used for baking (see the recipe on the following page for Butternut Spice Cake).

The nuts taste like a regular walnut (English walnut) but more buttery, hence the name. Butternut nuts are very nutritious with very high omega fat content. The pioneers of this land would search out butternut trees to collect from each fall, not only because they were nutritious but because the nuts would dry in the shell a few months after harvest and would easily keep for a number of years without going rancid.

Butternut wood is much softer than black walnut wood. It can be used to make furniture and is definitely a favorite of woodcarvers who want some malleability in their wood.

Settlers found the bark and nut rinds useful for dyeing homespun cloth to colours between light yellow, grey and dark brown. The confederate soldiers in the American civil war were nicknamed ‘butternuts’ because their uniforms were dyed using butternut husks.

Medicinally, butternut bark provided settlers with a mild cathartic remedy (a method of clearing the lower gastrointestinal tract of poisons or toxins), and was also used to treat dysentery and other stomach and intestinal discomfort. Perhaps we will ask our local naturopathic doctor, Shawn Yakimovich, about butternut trees in our July 24 medicinal herb outing!

— *By Jane Hunt, member of the board of directors, Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre*

Additional Resources – Butternut Recovery

Rose Fleguel, Chief Butternut Specialist, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (rose.fleguel@rvca.ca, 613-858-3678).

An excellent source of Butternut information is *Butternut Tree: A Landowner’s Resource Guide* <http://bit.ly/1VfXgNF>.

Butternut Spice Cake

This recipe is listed as Trumpour Cake in a handwritten family cookbook that was passed along from mother to daughter. It was "company" cake and was served on the best pedestal cake plate, never iced, just dusted with fine sugar. The difficulty with this cake was to gather the butternuts before the squirrels found them and then to enlist someone with time and patience to shell them and pry out the nutmeats. In years gone by, butternut trees were plentiful around the Bay of Quinte, in Ontario, where this recipe originated.

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Grease generously a 9-inch tube pan, plain or fluted.

Sprinkle bottom and halfway up sides of pan evenly with

½ cup finely chopped butternuts (or pecans or walnuts)

Sift together

2 cups pastry (soft wheat) flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon allspice

½ teaspoon nutmeg

½ teaspoon salt

Cream

2/3 cup butter

Blend in, beating until light and fluffy

1-1/3 cups lightly packed brown sugar

Beat in

2 eggs

Stir dry ingredients into creamed mixture alternately with

1 cup buttermilk or sour milk

Make 3 dry and 2 liquid additions, combining lightly after each.

Blend in

½ cup finely chopped butternuts (or pecans or walnuts)

Turn gently into prepared pan.

Bake in 350° oven for 45 to 50 minutes, or until cake springs back when lightly touched. Cook in pan for 10 minutes.

Turn out on cake rack and cool completely. Leave upside down and sprinkle sifted icing sugar over cake before serving.

We've Modernizing our Payment System!

We are excited to introduce new electronic options for donations or new and renewing memberships! We can now accept donations and membership payments through PayPal or email transfer to beckettj@ripnet.com.



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