



Project Story: The Bruces' Garden

Linda Elliott



HISTORY: This project was initiated by an ad hoc group of gardeners who wanted to see improvements to a garden at the south end of Cowan Point Drive. The garden was originally created in 2003 when the road was bisected to save a large maple. For safety reasons this center tree was eventually removed. Today, besides the stump, there is a small maple, a distressed dogwood and several small rhododendrons which are dwarfed by thistles and buttercups.

Our project application, "Bruces' Garden" Project recognizes two individuals in the community who have worked to maintain this area. After consultation with them, we submitted an application to RNSG requesting funds to purchase additional trees, plants and soil so that we -- with a larger volunteer group -- could improve the health of the garden and beautify this large publicly-viewed space. This garden is central to the Cowan Point community and will also be enjoyed by the many other Bowen residents who travel this road en route to two public beaches, Bowen Island Golf course, and a nearby walking trail.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: There were 12 volunteers involved in this project including Kathy Leishman, who volunteered her landscape and gardening skills. Half of the volunteers lived in the immediate area, others travelled from other parts of the island; all had an interest in an outdoor activity and participating in a planting project which could be a fun and creative learning experience.



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Our project application was approved in May but because of dryer and hotter than usual weather in June/July we requested a delayed start. In August, weeding and clearing began. In September, new trees were purchased and planted and in October additional plants, grasses and bulbs were added. In addition to the first assessment of the garden and the purchasing and transporting of plants, there were five working sessions of at least two hours. The garden received over 100 hours of dedicated attention and \$500 of new plant material.

BENEFITS: As with any undertaking and particularly gardening, results are not always immediately apparent. We've had positive feedback but hopefully spring will showcase a healthier and more colorful garden. More immediate is the interest from the community: those who drove or walked by the garden and offered verbal support, or expressed interest in involvement in new projects.

Last and most importantly are the benefits acknowledged by the volunteers themselves. This was a safe outdoor activity in a stressful covid time. We learned new gardening skills. We shared tools, stories and books. We heavy lifted together and we became good friends! After our "final touches" planting on Oct. 18, we celebrated as a group and recognized our leader Kathy and the importance of each other. Volunteer commitment and interest in further community projects has been ignited and ... "Bruces' Garden" will be weeded in the spring.





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THANKING OUR SPONSORS:

Linda Elliott (applicant) on behalf of Kathy Leishman, Jill Purdy, Elizabeth Hammerberg, Sheila McArthur, Susan Stoilen, Murray Atherton, Anna-Marie Atherton, Isabel Otter, Ailve McNestry, Nancy Edmonds, Joanne Gassman

