



## BURKE MOUNTAIN NATURALISTS

### The Plants of Colony Farm Regional Park

Colony Farm Park boasts a large and varied collection of flowers, shrubs and trees. Garden escapes, long since naturalized in the wild, mix happily with native plants. Starting in early spring and continuing through late summer, the display is frequently breathtaking. However, flowers are at their best in early summer when the colours and scents dazzle the senses. We recommend that you carry a good field guide to plants.

The Burke Mountain Naturalists and friends have identified **159 species** of plants at Colony Farm Park and the list is being updated continually. The total number of species includes grasses, sedges and ferns but these species are not listed in this brochure. Instead, we present here a discussion of the plants that you can expect to find in the fields, the woods and along the dykes, followed by a list of the plants' common names.

*We know that it is tempting to pick the flowers you see, but...**please don't!** Leave them for others to enjoy. More importantly, leave them alone to reproduce in future years. Uprooting plants or picking them before they have had a chance to seed means fewer plants will grow the following year. Furthermore, many of these plants are an important food source for wildlife -- butterflies and bees feed on the nectar, and birds and small mammals feast on the seeds and berries.*

#### **FIELDS AND DYKES:**

Hundreds of purple **Lupines** line the dykes in early April, while in ditches and wet places, **Skunk Cabbages** send forth their yellow sheaths. Later, the dykes are awash in soft shades of pink, lilac and white as drifts of the introduced **Dame's Rocket** appear.

April brings forth the dainty pink flowers of **Salmonberry** and the cream sprays of **Red Elderberry**. Both these shrubs are an important food source for wildlife. In mid-summer, large flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons come to the Park to feast on the elderberries.

By mid-May, the fields are yellow with the blooms of **Creeping Buttercup**. The white blossoms of **Thimbleberry**, **Viburnum Opulus** (also called European Cranberry, or Guelder Rose) and **Red-Osier Dogwood** contrast with the green foliage. Look for these species in the riparian habitat (streamside vegetation) of the ditches and along the woodland edges. Look for the **Musk Mallow**, a pretty garden plant with paper-thin flowers.

Also growing in some of moist areas of the Park is the extremely toxic **Water Hemlock**. This is a member of the carrot family and produces attractive umbels of white flowers.

Summer brings an abundance of colour. **Yellow Lysimachia**, another garden escapee, intermingles with tall spikes of purple **Fireweed** to create an eye-catching spectacle. The species name for Fireweed is *angustifolium*, meaning "narrow-leaved". Pink-flowering **Broad-leaved Peavine**, long since escaped from cultivation, twine along the banks, mixing with several species of purple **Vetch**.

The slender **Orange Hawkweed** can be found with **Hairy Cat's-Ear** along the dyke trails. Near the Coquitlam side of the Millennium Bridge, look for the yellow-orange blooms of the **Common Touch-Me-Not**, a member of the *impatiens* family. When lightly touched, the ripe seed pods 'pop', shooting their seeds far and wide.

The oddly named but colourful **Viper's Bugloss** is found in small numbers along the dyke, mostly on the Port Coquitlam side, about halfway between the pumphouse and Indian Reserve #2. Despite its minor presence in the Park, this introduced member of the Forget-Me-Not family is able to readily colonize disturbed places, including farmland. Undoubtedly it will increase here. The hairy broad leaves give rise to the name "bugloss" which means "ox-tongue".

Chickweeds, the bane of gardeners wanting a weed-free lawn, are represented in the Park by **Field Chickweed** which bees find attractive. On the Coquitlam side of the Park, an enormous clump of **Day Lilies** can be found blooming about halfway around the dyke trail.

In the fields and along the dykes, **Canada Thistle** and the larger **Bull Thistle** form a soft lilac haze. Although these introduced members of the Sunflower family are not very popular with farmers, they are valuable to wildlife. Butterflies sip their nectar, and in late summer American Goldfinches

feed by the hundreds on the thistle seeds. Bull Thistle is said to produce very tasty honey.

**St. John's Wort**, also called Klamath Weed, bears a cluster of very attractive yellow flowers which brighten the wayside. If you look closely at the petal tips, you may see tiny black dots. These plants are found in open sunny areas of the Park. The word "wort" which occurs in many common plant names is Old English for herbs and other plants that had medicinal uses.

Watch for the **Evening-Primrose**, which true to its name, opens its pale yellow flowers as evening approaches. This plant is a biennial, meaning its life-cycle is completed in two years. Golden clusters of **Tansy** signal summer's approaching end. One of the prettiest flowers of August is **Chicory**, with its tall stalks – sometimes 4 feet high – covered by rays of dazzling blue flowers. By late August, **Douglas' Asters** are in the full bloom.

**Oxeye Daisies** grow in profusion along the dykes in summer. This introduced plant is abundant throughout the region and lasts long after other blossoms have vanished. Did you know that the word "daisy" comes from the Anglo Saxon "*daeges eye*" which means "day's eye"?

If you can tear your eyes away from the bigger showier plants, take a look beneath your feet. Nestled along the ground, inconspicuous unless pointed out, is the delicate **Eyebright** with its lower petals striped purple. Look also for the tiny yellow flowers of **Black Medic** and purple **Heal-All**, which is a member of the mint family and bears a reputation for healing numerous ailments. Abundant on the dyke trails is **Pineapple Weed**, so named because the flower, when bruised, smells like pineapple.

Wild roses (**Nootka Rose** and **Dog Rose**), various **Willow** species, **Hardhack** and several species of **Blackberry** are abundant on the banks of the dykes and along the ditches and the river. The huge thickets of blackberries offer protective cover for a number of birds, particularly various sparrow species in the winter. Look also for **Pacific Crabapple** and **Laburnum**. The latter is most noticeable in spring, with its eye-catching chains of yellow flowers. In the ditches, look for **Yellow Pond Lily** and **Bladderwort**.

#### **WOODS:**

As the dykes wind their way past woodlots on the Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam sides of the Park, you will notice some of the same species already

mentioned, but look for the tall **Black Cottonwood** trees which release the cotton-like seed masses in late spring.

**Red Alder** of course is very common here. Did you know that the bark of this tree contains a chemical called salicin, which is related to the pain-killer in aspirin? Red Alder is very attractive to wildlife for its 'cones' feed a variety of birds. Alder is also known as a 'pioneer' species, one of the first trees to grow on logged or burned ground. It helps to fix nitrogen in the soil thus preparing the way for other plants to follow on disturbed sites.

Here and there, a **Mountain Ash** (the introduced **Rowan Tree**, not the native species) is found. This species usually has between eleven to fifteen leaflets, while the native Mountain Ash has seven to eleven species.

**Black Locust** trees are identified by their finely cut leaves, their white fragrant flower clusters and large sharp thorns. A few occur in the woods. On the Coquitlam side, the dyke eventually leaves the open and leads through woods where several large **Horse Chestnuts** can be found.

Another escape from cultivation is **Kerria**, a familiar spring garden shrub which is noticed for its golden 'pom-pom' blooms scattered along the arching branches. Growing against the trunk of a Cottonwood, or mingling with the other shrubs, it adds a sunny glow to the woods.

A trail cutting through the woods, not far from where the Port Coquitlam side dyke ends, leads to an abundance of different plants. In spring, **Pacific Bleeding Hearts** with their pink flowers and lacy leaves are common. **False Lily-of-the-Valley** carpets the forest floor in summer, and later **Foxgloves** are observed.

Drifts of **Herb Robert**, a geranium or cranesbill, and **Red Campion** bloom alongside the trail. **Black Twinberry** (a honeysuckle) is abundant in places along the wooded trail on the Coquitlam side of the Park. **Black Raspberry**, also called "Black Cap" (identified by its white stems), **Cascara**, **Ninebark** and **Snowberry** can all be found in the woods and along the woodland edges.

**Fringecup** grows in damp, shaded areas. Its flowers grow only on one side of the stem and turn pink or red with age, features which make for easy identification. The hairy stems and large maple-like leaves also aid in correctly naming this plant. It is not as abundant at Colony Farm Park as it is in some other local areas.

The leaves of **Vine Maple**, a multi-stemmed small tree, turn bright red in the autumn, adding a fiery glow to other tall foliage. In spring, they produce small but attractive flowers. Another multi-stemmed shrub is the **Hazelnut**, which sends forth yellow catkins in early spring.

**Indian Plum**, sometimes called **Oso-Berry**, is one of the first shrubs to produce growth in the spring. Look for bright green leaves standing upright, and small white blossoms spilling from each leaf cluster. It is so attractive to birds that its fruits rarely last long enough for us to see.

Look for a few **Sitka Spruce** in the woods alongside the trail. If you continue along the dyke past the trail into the woods, watch for **Shore Pines** in the wetlands to your left. This sub-species of the **Lodgepole Pine** prefers damp areas and is usually indicative of boggy conditions.

#### OTHER:

As you drive down Colony Farm Road, notice the many large stumps. Magnificent old **Elms** and **Horse Chestnuts** used to line parts of the drive.

#### PLANT LIST FOR COLONY FARM PARK

The following is a list of the plant species identified at Colony Farm Park. This list is divided into two categories: herbaceous (flowering) plants (76 species) and trees and shrubs (46 species). The common names are listed alphabetically for each of these categories. The common names for native plants conform to Plants of Coastal British Columbia, by Pojar & MacKinnon (1994). If not contained in this source, common names were taken from Trees, Shrubs and Flowers to Know in British Columbia & Washington, by Lyons & Merilees (1995)

Non-native species have an asterisk (\*) after their name. They are plants that have been introduced from elsewhere in the world and are now established here in the Lower Mainland, or they are more recent escapees from gardens.

#### Herbaceous (Flowering) Plants

Black Medic	Cattail
Bladder Campion *	Chicory *
Bladderwort	Common Dandelion *
Broadleaf Plantain *	Common Groundsel *
Broad-leaved Peavine *	Common Mullein *
Broad-leaved Willowherb	Common Touch-Me-Not
Bull Thistle *	Common Vetch *
	Contorted Pod Evening Primrose

Cooley's Hedge Nettle	Oxeye Daisy *
Creeping Buttercup *	Pacific Bleeding Heart
Curled Dock	Pineapple Weed *
Dame's Rocket *	Poison-Hemlock
Day Lily *	Policeman's Helmet
Douglas' Aster	Prickly Lettuce *
Duckweed species	Purple Loosestrife *
English Plantain *	Purple Toadflax *
European Bittersweet *	Red Clover *
Eyebright *	Red Columbine
Field Bindweed *	Rose Campion *
False Lily-of-the-Valley	Sheep Sorrel *
Field Chickweed	Skunk Cabbage
Fireweed	Small Bedstraw
Floating-leaved Pondweed	Smooth Hawksbeard *
Foxglove *	Spearmint *
Fringecup	Stinging Nettle *
Hairy Cat's-Ear *	St. John's Wort *
Heal-All (Self-Heal)	Tansy *
Hedge Mustard *	Tufted Vetch *
Hemp-Nettle *	Viper's Bugloss *
Herb-Robert *	Wall Lettuce *
Horseweed	Water-Parsnip
Large-leaved Lupine	Water-Plantain
Marsh Yellow Cress	Western Bittercress
Musk Mallow *	White Campion *
Narrow-leaved Hawkweed	White Clover *
Nipplewort *	White Sweet Clover
Orange Hawkweed *	Yarrow
	Yellow Lysimachia *
	Yellow Pond-Lily

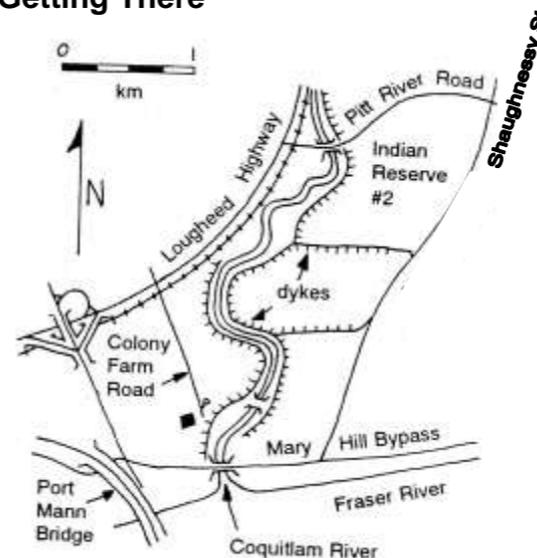
#### Trees and Shrubs

Beaked Hazelnut	Mountain Ash *
Bigleaf Maple	Ninebark
Bitter Cherry	Nootka Rose
Black Cottonwood	Oak sp. *
Black Hawthorn	Pacific Crabapple
Black Locust *	Pacific Willow
Black Raspberry	Red Alder
Black Twinberry	Red Elderberry
Butterfly Bush *	Red-Osier Dogwood
Common Hawthorn *	Salmonberry
Cascara	Scotch Broom *
Dog Rose	Scouler's Willow
Douglas Fir	Shore Pine
Elm *	Sitka Spruce
European Cranberry Bush *	Sitka Willow
Evergreen Huckleberry	Snowberry
Hardhack	Sumac *
Himalayan Blackberry *	Thimbleberry
Horse Chestnut *	Trailing Blackberry
Indian Plum	Vine Maple
Kerria *	Western Red Cedar
Laburnum *	Weeping Willow *
Lombardy Poplar *	White Birch



Photo by K. Takahashi

#### Getting There



#### DIRECTIONS:

Colony Farm Park is located along both sides of the Coquitlam River from the river mouth north to Indian Reserve #2. Dyke access is gained along Shaughnessy Street and from the end of Colony Farm Road. Parking is available at both sites.

CAUTION: ALWAYS LOCK YOUR VEHICLE, AND DO NOT LEAVE VALUABLES INSIDE.

No motorized vehicles. Dogs are welcome, but must be on leash.

#### Contact Information

- **Burke Mountain Naturalists**  
PO Box 52540  
RPO Coquitlam Centre  
COQUITLAM BC, V3B 7J4  
604-937-3483  
BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com  
[www.bmn.bc.ca](http://www.bmn.bc.ca)

BMN holds meetings on the second Tuesday of each month (except June, July and August) at Como Lake United Church, 535 Marmont Street. Regular walks and hikes are organised throughout the year. New members are always welcome. Feel free to attend our meetings to find out more.

*BMN wants to hear of any unusual wildlife you see. Your observations will contribute to our knowledge of the local environment.*

- **Metro Vancouver Parks**  
9174 Avalon Avenue  
BURNABY, BC, V3N 4G8  
604-520-6442  
[www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

A map showing the features and facilities in Colony Farm Regional Park is available on the Metro Vancouver web site (in pdf format).

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