

THE IUE CELEBRATES EARTHDAY

The Institute of Urban Ecology (IUE) and students from David Brankin Elementary School in Surrey came together to celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd by planting more than 300 native shrubs. The planting took place in a BC Hydro utility corridor located only minutes from the school. The collaborative planting effort between David Brankin School and the IUE has become somewhat of a tradition. On every Earth Day for the past seven years we have gathered together to plant native species in the utility corridor creating vital habitat for local birds and small mammals. Plantings like this are especially important for wildlife species trying to make their homes in an urban environment where the habitats they use for food and shelter are under constant threat from human development.

This year more than 300 students participated in the event and in the last seven years over 2000 native plants were planted. Karin England, IUE's Eco-Education Coordinator says, "It is wonderful to be able to come back each year and show the new students what we can achieve by planting native plants. After all, their work has been flourishing at this site for almost a decade." The IUE looks forward to continuing our work with David Brankin School on Earth Day next year and in the years to come!

—Chris Mehuys, Planting Coordinator



Students from David Brankin Elementary dig deep for Earth Day, April 22nd 2004

INTRODUCING THE URBAN QUILT SERIES: STITCHING HABITAT PATCHES INTO ECOSYSTEMS

What is biodiversity and why is it important? How does urban development affect biodiversity? Is a habitat patch different from a green space? How is biodiversity, so integral to the health of an ecosystem, dependent on optimal patch characteristics? Furthermore, why is it important to link patches together? We will explore all of these questions and more in this 4 part series examining the effects of urban development on biodiversity. For example, the size, shape, location and habitat quality of a patch can greatly increase biodiversity. As well, connectivity between green spaces, through the enhancement of hydro-corridors and backyard habitat can positively impact wildlife utilization and subsequent ecosystem health.



The 'Urban Quilt' provides a memorable metaphor for the current and past efforts on behalf of the IUE to promote sustainability in the urban environment. Through its Green Links projects, the IUE has successfully 'stitched' together several small and large scale patches within the Coquitlam, Surrey-Delta and Burnaby districts. These areas are a working example of the urban quilts guiding principle – stitching habitat patches into ecosystems. The Urban Quilt series will expand on the importance of incorporating optimal patch characteristics during the development planning stage and discuss other ways to minimize the impact of urbanization to biodiversity. You too can help 'stitch' together our urban quilt – enter the 8th annual IUE Nature's Havens Challenge and create native backyard habitat (see details in the Notes section).

—Tamsin Dunbar, Environmental Research Technician



HOMEOWNER AND BUILDER ACTION KITS AVAILABLE SOON

The Institute of Urban Ecology is developing action kits to raise awareness about sustainable housing options. Two separate kits will soon be available. The first is for the new home-buyer or homeowner and will feature tips on eco-friendly choices available when building a home as well as options that can help to create more sustainable lifestyles for the homeowner. A second kit targets homebuilders and will showcase options that minimize environmental impacts during construction.

A lot of energy and resources are required to build and maintain a home. About 40% of the raw materials and energy used globally are for buildings. Over the average 40 year life span of a home it will require about 1/3 again as many resources to replace or renew the original materials. With so many resources used in the building of a home, homeowners have an opportunity to minimize their negative environmental impact through the choices made during all stages of the home-owning process. Our Homeowner and Builder Action Kits are designed to increase the knowledge of homeowners and builders of the many options that are available to them as they make these choices.

If you are building a new home, landscaping your yard or furnishing and maintaining an existing home these Action Kits can help you make choices that will improve the environmental quality of your home and your planet.

—Karin England, Eco-Education Coordinator



THE GREEN LINK

EDITOR/LAYOUT:

- Ilona Naujokaitis-Lewis

CONTRIBUTORS:

- Tamsin Dunbar
- Karin England
- Chris Mehufs
- Val Schaefer

PHOTOGRAPHS:

- IUE Staff

THE GREEN LINK is a quarterly publication of the Douglas College Institute of Urban Ecology. The IUE is a non-profit organization working to connect people with nature in the Lower Mainland. For more information about the Institute, to subscribe to the IUE's newsletter **THE GREEN LINK**, or to comment on the newsletter, please contact us at:

Institute of Urban Ecology
PO Box 2503
New Westminster, BC
V3L 5B2

Tel : 604.527.5522
Fax: 604.527.5095

E-mail: iue@douglas.bc.ca
Web: www.douglas.bc.ca/iue

We are always trying to reduce our paper consumption--let us know if we can send you your copy of **THE GREEN LINK** by e-mail.

DID YOU KNOW?



An energy efficient fridge uses only 28% of the energy of a conventional fridge.



A water efficient dishwasher uses only 50% of the water of a conventional dishwasher.



A low flush toilet uses only 3-6 litres of water per flush compared to 20 litres for a conventional toilet.



Deciduous trees planted to shade south facing windows lower house temperatures in the summer and let light in during the winter.



Eco-friendly flooring made from bamboo, which can grow to maturity in 5-6 years, provides a beautiful floor and is more durable than most hardwood species.



Use native plants as much as possible when landscaping your backyard. They often require less maintenance including less watering and fertilizing.



Do you have a slug problem in your prized vegetable garden? Use a non-toxic alternative to pesticides such as crushed eggshells around the perimeter of the plants. Slugs avoid sharp objects and the eggshells add fertilizer to your garden.

DREAMING OF A NATIVE PLANT OASIS?

Is your yard in need of a facelift but you just don't have time to do anything about it? Or, have you run out of ideas about what to plant? The Institute of Urban Ecology is here to help! For only \$100, our staff will visit your yard and design a customised planting plan for you. Designs are tailored to suit the local conditions including soil type and light availability as well as the home owner's vision of their backyard haven. We will even order the plants you need from our wholesalers so that you get them at discounted wholesale prices. Once the plants arrive, you simply plant them in the spots indicated on the planting plan. Or, if you don't have time for planting we will gladly do it for you for an additional fee.

Since native plants are adapted to local soil and climatic conditions they tend to be more resilient to native pests relative to non-native plants. As well, native plant species provide essential habitat in the form of food and shelter for native wildlife species, which is especially important in our fast growing urban centre. For example, the red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) is a shrub with beautiful deep red flowers that are a delicious meal for hummingbirds found in the Lower Mainland. As if those benefits weren't enough, native plants will also save you time because they require less maintenance and reduce the amount of water and fertilizer required. We use native plants in our planting designs so you can be sure that by the time we're finished your yard will be environmentally friendly as well as beautiful. If you are interested in having IUE staff design your garden please contact us at 604.527.5522.

—Karin England, Eco-Education Coordinator

IUE staff planting design expertise produced a woodland theme backyard garden in Burnaby. Top: First steps involve assessing the yard; Middle: On the way there; Bottom: The final result



IUE NOTES & UPDATES

▪ Nature's Havens Challenge 2004 is NOW ON!!

Create wildlife habitat in your own backyard! Wildlife species depend on habitat for food, shelter and water. As urban areas expand wildlife have fewer natural areas where they can find the habitat they need to survive. We challenge you to make your yard or balcony a haven for birds, butterflies and other wildlife by providing habitat often missing from our cityscapes. *Contact us for information and registration packages. Hurry the contest ends June 30th.*

▪ Urban Restoration Gets a Major Boost in Expertise

Brinkman and Associates Reforestation Ltd. are perhaps best known for their reforestation efforts that involve replanting logged sites with millions of seedlings. Brinkman is also involved in restoration projects in urban settings and along utility corridors. Their recent design for the wetland at Lost Lagoon in Stanley Park has received much praise. Brinkman has generously offered its expertise and advice for any major future restoration projects of the IUE.

▪ EJLB Foundation Continues its Support

One of our long-time partners in the Green Links project is the EJLB Foundation out of Montreal. The EJLB Foundation was one of the first supporters of Green Links and played a significant role in making the project the award-winning success it has become. The EJLB Foundation has very generously contributed another \$3,000 this year to support our workshops and plantings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact us at (604)527-5522 or iue@douglas.bc.ca for more information or to get involved with any of the following events.

WORKSHOPS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Growing Naturally: Interested in organic gardening principles? Find out about companion planting, how to control plant pests naturally and a whole lot more.

McGill Library, Burnaby

- July 22nd, 10:30 AM
- July 19th, 7:30 PM

Metrotown Library, Burnaby

- July 26th, 7:30 PM
- July 29th, 10:30 AM

Calling All Potential Volunteers

Are you familiar with the wildlife and vegetation in the Lower Mainland? Are you a budding naturalist and possess strong word processing skills? We are developing a natural history guide for the Central Valley Greenway and need your help. We are also seeking volunteers to help with development of an 'Economic Garden' brochure. *If interested please call the IUE and ask for Ilona (Volunteer Coordinator).*



THE URBAN QUILT

Green Links Art Contest



Stitching together the urban quilt is the theme of this year's Green Links art contest. The fabric of our cityscape does not only include houses and roads but important natural areas representing habitat patches for wildlife. Take a photo, colour a picture or create a poster that shows how your city is working to stitch together the diversity of patches. *Contact the IUE for more information. Entries due August 2nd.*

INSTITUTE SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Platinum (\$100,000+)

- The Real Estate Foundation of BC
- BC Hydro
- Human Resources Development Canada Job Creation Partnership Program
- Environment Canada- EcoAction 2000
- College and Pit Operators Partnership

Gold (\$50,000+)

- Challenge/Student Summer Works
- Terasen
- Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
- Douglas College

Silver (\$10,000+)

- Vancouver Foundation
- Fisheries Renewal BC
- VanCity
- City of Surrey
- Millennium Bureau of Canada
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- Public Conservation Assistance Fund
- Douglas College Work Study
- Corporation of Delta

Bronze (\$1,000 - \$10,000)

- Shell Environmental Fund
- Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry
- EJLB Foundation
- BC 21
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
- Home Depot
- City of Coquitlam
- Coquitlam River Watershed Society
- Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program
- Trans Mountain Pipeline
- Forest Alliance of BC
- Lehigh Cement Ltd.
- Art Knapp Plantland
- University of Victoria

In Kind Donations

- Habitat Restoration Program, Douglas College
- City of New Westminster
- Greater Vancouver Regional District
- T. Buck Suzuki Foundation
- Colony Farms Park Association
- Tree Canada Foundation
- City of Burnaby
- Linnaea Native Plant Nursery

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN US THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT AND DONATIONS!