

March 2024

The Friends
of the Public Gardens



Newsletter

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Newsletter Topics

- The Trees of the Public Gardens
- Happy Spring Equinox March 19/24
- Upcoming Events
- Gardens Mural Find A New Home
- On The Wild Side
- Q& A

Security

24-hour security continues to the end of the fiscal year and is in the 2024 budget. Open hours until spring – 8 AM to 4 PM.

Q & A

Q & A is a standard item. If you help by asking the questions, we will give you the answers. Just email your question to info@halifaxpublicgardens.ca. Please put in the subject line “Newsletter Question.”

Previous Newsletters

You could also peruse our newsletters starting at March 2020 by Barbara Carleton. Copy the link <https://www.halifaxpublicgardens.ca/new-page-2> or go to the website and click 'About', then click Newsletters



The Trees of the Public Gardens #20

Witch-hazel

Hamamelis virginiana or *Hamamelis mollis*

For Canadian gardeners, Witch Hazel is most certainly a harbinger of spring. Its flowering period marks the beginning of a new growing season by bringing forth a welcome burst of colour and fragrance after the long winter months. As such, Witch-Hazel holds a special place as a symbolic herald of spring.

The unique spidery and colourful blooms in shades of yellow and red provide a striking contrast to the winter landscape. Although it can be groomed into a small tree, the Witch-Hazel that our gardens have is in its classic shrub form. Although you won't find it on the garden's map, if you are fortunate enough to be in the centre-west section of the garden over the next while, you will have an opportunity to enjoy it.

The name's origin harkens back to the Middle Ages, and the word Wyche means bendable in Middle English. The forked branches were and are used in dowsing or water witching, a practice believed to find underground water sources. The hazel part of the name refers to the leaf's similarity to the actual hazel (*Corylus*) tree.

The *virginiana* and *mollis* species are both called Witch-Hazel. The *virginiana* is native to North America, and the *mollis* came via China. Many landscape plant species tend to be *mollis*, with larger and more fragrant blossoms.

David Kerr

Happy Spring Equinox March 19/24

Spring Equinox Ritual by Edward Hays

As the sun's rays strike our planet more directly, the earth responds with newness and freshness. Our spiritual ancestors set this day apart as sacred, as a feast to celebrate the resurrection of the earth. The sun, radiant and healing, revitalizes the dark and dormant, as days and nights are again of equal length on the day of the equinox.

May the eternal experience of spring prepare each of us for a personal rebirth and resurrection. May it be a pledge-sign that life rises out of death. A true planetary pilgrim experiences this feast not as a spectator but as a concelebrant with the earth and all creation.



Upcoming Events

April 26-29: Global Nature Challenge

Combine our Victorian Gardens with the Annual, global, community science competition to document urban biodiversity. Explore our urban oasis, its plants and creatures and submit your finds to INaturalist to help HRM win the title.

May 8: Nova Scotia Walks

The goal of walk day is to celebrate how walking connects us to our communities and to each other. Walks are planned in the Halifax Public Gardens. [Nova Scotia Walk Day | Hike Nova Scotia](#). Details on the Gardens Walks will be available soon.

Gardens Mural Finds a New Home

Andrew Neville first learned that the Quinpool Rd. McDonald's Restaurant was planning a major renovation at least five years ago. He knew of the icon mural of the Halifax Public Gardens was painted by Ray LaFresne, in 1994.

Andrew began talking to people and gaining support for the idea to save the Mural and find somewhere where it could still be appreciated and enjoyed. About three years ago, he was still so keen, he started a petition.

A different destiny occurred for the McDonald property and the changes that were rapidly happening with Quinpool Road. The property was sold to Dixel Developments and destined to be demolished.

By this time, never wavering from their goal, two friends were solidly on side with Andrew and the three were ready execute their plan to remove the mural with the gracious permission of Dixel.

Ian Matheson of Propeller Brewery and operator of the Propeller Arcade had secured the new home for the mural and Evan Elliott had the skills and knowledge to orchestrate the move to the Propeller Arcade in the former Wormwood Theatre below the Brewery on Gottingen Street.

The first discovery shock was that the Mural was painted on a gyprock wall that was on top of two previous gyprock walls. They managed to separate the three and cut out four panels that they further cut into 16 pieces. They transported them to the Arcade and began the monstrous task of reassembly on the upper half of an existing wall. Laboriously and with tremendous ingenuity each of the pieces went together and with chains securing each piece, all 16 pieces were magically reunited as one complete Mural once again.

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Gardens Mural Finds a New Home, (cont'd)

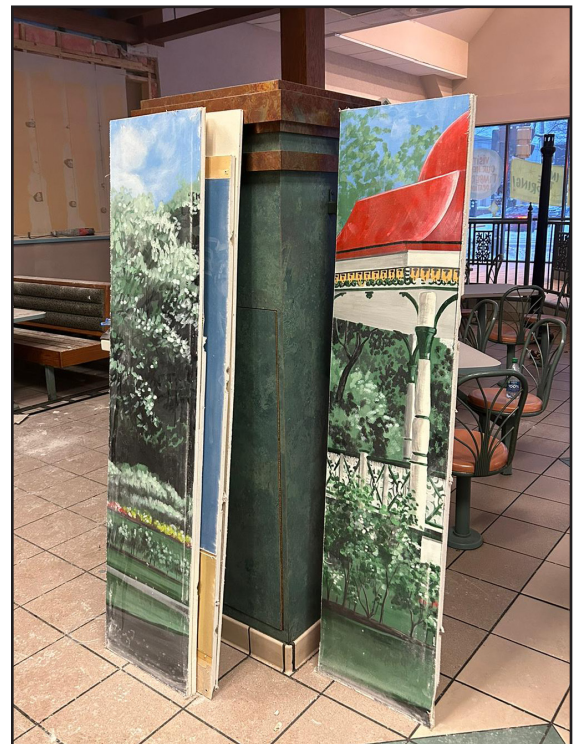
The mural has been moved from McDonald's on Quinpool to the Propeller Arcade on Gottigen Street.



As it was since 1994



Evan Elliott and Andrew Neville. Three gyprock walls were removed.





New location with a thumbs up from Evan, Ian and Andrew.



Andrew and Ian Matheson with Janet Brush.



On The Wild Side

Butterflies, nature's important assistants. Can you identify them ?
Send to info@halifaxpublicgardens.ca



Q & A

Q. I am visiting your city in May via a cruise ship. Are the Gardens worth visiting? Anything to see?

A. Check by month on the Home Page halifaxpublicgardens.ca Scroll down to What's Blooming and click on More Information.

Q. When will the Coffee Shop open this year.

A. Expecting to be open by May 1.

