

SENIOR SCAPE: Serenity in the Arboretum

By Sylvia Dickens

Where do you go to escape technological distractions, noisy traffic and the stress of living amidst concrete structures? Nothing eases the spirit more than the softness of nature, and the Arboretum behind the Aurora Seniors' Centre is the perfect place.

A few weeks back while strolling with my dog along the well-manicured grassy paths that meander throughout this expansive area, I had the pleasure of speaking with a senior volunteer. He was working his way into the tall grasses alongside the trails to check on the numerous trees that the volunteer team had planted. We had a pleasant albeit short chat about the serenity of the Arboretum, its beauty and the great job they were doing to make sure it remains a vibrant nature site.

You'd be hard pressed to find another local site as big and welcoming as this one.

The entire area boasts a variety of plants and trees. Who would have guessed that what we homeowners would call weeds could smell so sweet. Did you know that milkweed has a wonderful fragrance? Butterflies love them! There also is a tall mauve-flowered plant and one that displays yellow flowers similar to dandelions that smell beautiful.

As you make your way through the site, you will hear the wonderful song of finches as they flit from tree to tree. Traffic noise can be so overwhelming elsewhere but here, the birds take precedence. How peaceful to hear nothing but nature!

And then there is the large pond that is home to a few ducks and, at last look, a beautiful and elegant swan. No doubt Canada Geese and more ducks layover here during spring and fall migrations. Strategically placed park benches invite you to sit, relax and absorb the wonders of nature around you.

The Arboretum would be nothing without the dedicated volunteers who take care of it year after year. This past spring, 48 community volunteers took approximately 1-1/2 hours to plant and mulch about 500 trees and shrubs. The grand total of all plantings this spring in the Arboretum and its nurseries was 1,801. These concentrated planting events really boost the continued reforestation greening of the Arboretum space to be greatly enjoyed by families of all ages. The team also ensures that some invasive plants are kept under control and do not overtake the more desirable ones.

Volunteers welcome

You can help keep the Arboretum in prime shape by volunteering. No experience needed. The next event is the annual Shoreline Cleanup on Saturday, September 20 at 10 a.m. Volunteers meet at the Gazebo near the soccer dome behind the Aurora Leisure Complex off Industrial Parkway. The pond is a short pleasant walk from here. Various volunteer activities continue throughout the summer and fall. Seniors are encouraged to join at www.auroraarboretum.ca to be notified of upcoming events.

Try it

Have you been wondering about the pFIT program ? what is it, what it does, how you do it? This strength training program incorporates the clinically-proven p44 Stepper portable resistance device that is specially designed for older adults to be used from a chair. pFIT is a fun, social and safe way to increase lower body strength, improve range of motion, maintain balance and tone up muscles.

Organizers are offering a pFIT ?Try It? session on Monday September 15 at 11 a.m. Please sign up at Reception if you are interested in trying this increasingly popular program.