

## Growing Our Urban Forests

The City's tree planting program has wrapped up for 2022 with more than 3,000 tree plugs planted in our natural forested areas this year. This brings the total to 12,000 tree and shrub plugs added to our urban forest over the past five years

City parks crews diversified plantings in Foster Park, Renz Park, Shelly Creek Park South, Bridgewater Park and Humphrey Park. As well as shore pine and Douglas fir, crews included some smaller trees and large shrubs better suited for naturalizing in smaller parks. Osmaronia or Osoberry has been successful in a trial at Foster Park in 2022, and we are now adding other climate hardy BC native plants such as red-flowering currant, Pacific crabapple and Nootka rose. Crews also tried a few Pacific rhododendron plugs in select locations which we hope will be successful. Their preferred habitat is described as 'fairly dry open forests and edges', so we hope this pretty, pink flowering native plant will help beautify our natural forest areas for many years.

Pacific crabapple is another native plant new this year. This small tree provides food for butterfly caterpillars and other insects, nesting sites for birds, and the flowers attract hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators for the nectar and pollen. The small apples are eaten by many birds including cedar waxwings, woodpeckers, and grosbeaks. The tiny apples are sour but become sweet once cooked.

The City is developing an urban forest strategy which will provide baseline information about the state of our urban forest, help to develop a long-term vision, and adopt tangible goals for its management and growth. This strategy will be presented to Council in early 2023. For information about the strategy please refer to [Let's Talk Parksville](#).

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**For more information:**

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