

Summary of the 2021 TOTY Nominations

1. Linden Tree (Tilia)

You can find this tree in Comox Marina Park at the foot of Wilcox St, just up the hill from the gazebo. This multi-stem tree is about 23 m tall and the largest stem is 37 cm DBH. The nominator said, " I don't know much about it but would love to know more. I was amazed when I saw it. It is beautiful in bloom."

Nominator: Christine Wilson

Committee notes: The exact species of this tree is a mystery at this point and it has a very unusual form for a linden. The flowers are very fragrant.

2. Douglas Fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii).

"This tree is on private property just to the north of Piercy Rd. between Condensory Rd. and Dove Creek Rd. (in the field west of 3220 Piercy). It is gnarled and has very large branches. It is monstrous in size and shape: 35m tall and 150 cm DBH."

Nominator: Trevor Reynolds

Committee note: if you are in a vehicle, there isn't much room to pull off the road so please consider parking on either Condensory or Dove Creek Rd and walking to view this tree.

3. Sitka Spruce (Picea sitchensis).

This tree sits beside the Brooklyn Creek (on the east side of the creek) very close to a bench dedicated to Mack Laing close to the bridge at the junction of Brooklyn Creek Park, Mack Laing Park and Macdonald Wood Park at the far east end of Comox Ave off Pritchard. "Since this competition started I have been meaning to nominate this tree. It is right on the bank of Brooklyn Creek close to the public path. The first time I walked past it 7 years ago there were two small kids playing around the buttress roots. The roots rise up a bit from the ground creating a natural "fort". One of the children said, "Let's pretend we are elves and this is our home". Since then, every time I walk by it I am reminded of the joy and creativity trees can inspire. It looks to me that this tree is also older than most of the trees around so I'm curious why it was left standing.

Another reminder that trees are resilient!"

Nominator: Jennifer Geddes

Committee notes: consider the difference in branching between this tree and tree #4 and speculate why this is so.

4. Sitka Spruce (Picea sitchensis).

"This tree lives at 49 degrees, 45 minutes and 55.8 seconds north and 125 degrees 4 minutes and 00.1 seconds west. UTM is 10 351173 east, 5514608 north. (6380

Headquarters Rd. Merville). If by bicycle enter the driveway and turn at first left. Go through the yard and look for the green flagging leading to the tree. If you are coming by vehicle you need to park somewhere safe on Headquarters or Davis and walk.

This tree is on family land and safe from the saws! It is known to be freaking tall (22m) and fat (90 cm DBH) and is approximately 80 years old. It survived the fire of '38 as it is growing at the edge of a wetland. Huge branches all the way to the ground have allowed it to escape the logging. Old timers in the area remember climbing it for a spectacular view. One fellow said he and his girlfriend used to "snuggle" under it. We call her "Mama Spruce" so, obviously a matron."

Nominators: Harold Macy and Judy Racher.

5. Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*).

"You will find this wonderful tree at the corner of Pidcock and 3rd in Courtenay (345 Pidcock St.) on the NE corner of the lot. This chestnut is approximately 33m tall and is suspected to be an original tree with the building of the house in 1916. It is magnificent in the spring when it is in full bloom. It is a "sentinel" in the neighbourhood. Provides a lot of shade and in the fall the children like the conkers."

Nominator: Patricia Foster

6. Golden Weeping Willow (*Salix x sepulchralis* var *chrysocoma*)

"Find this tree in the Comox Marina Park at the foot of Wilcox St, below the D'esterre center. This tree is approximately 25 m tall and 100 years old. It was probably planted by the family of Sydney D'esterre around 1925-40. There is a picture, an aerial view of Comox, from 1947 (Comox museum). The tree back then was between 5 to 9 feet tall and 20 years old. It is a cross between the Chinese original weeping willow, *Salix babylonica*, and the hardy European White Willow, *Salix alba*. The hybrid is more vigorous and the young stems are golden. 'Chrysocoma' means Golden-haired. *Salix* possibly from Celtic, sal, near, and lis, water. It was introduced to North America in 1906. In 1974 the marina in Comox was filled with soil and sand creating what is now Marina Park. The tree was planted just above the high tide, revealing where the shore line was in the 1947 picture. This tree is very significant to our community and hopefully will live for a few more decades. The Town of Comox Parks is in the process of making the willow safer and installing a split cedar fence and planting a meadow with bulbs and flowers below the tree."

Nominator: Dany Fortin

7. Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*).

This tree is in Kitty Coleman Park, on the south side of Kitty Coleman Creek a little way up stream of the beach. The easiest way is found from Coleman Road: turn left onto

Aldergrove Rd. and park at the end of Aldergrove Rd. and follow the path in to see the tree before the campsites. According to the BC Big Tree Registry it is 55 m tall and 270cm DBH and over 500 years old. "I've heard it's the largest old growth fir left in the Comox Valley. Kitty Coleman Park was created for the Merville Soldiers' Settlement in 1919. There used to be cabins in the park which belonged to Merville soldier settlement families. Sites of the cabins are now campsites for the park."

Nominator: John Milne

8. Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). ‘

"The Douglas fir at 1500 Balmoral Avenue is one of the largest urban trees in the Comox Valley at 150 cm DBH and 26 m tall. It predates colonization, and may be old growth (about 250 years old). It is a truly venerable tree whose size and resilience despite urbanization are remarkable. Its survival is a tribute to the resilience of the species and the foresight of generations of past stewards of the property. All too often large urban trees are viewed as hazards and cut down. This giant forms an important part of the Balmoral Avenue streetscape, and some of our neighbours have called it a "community tree". A glass insulator remains partially embedded in the trunk. The tree has naturally developed about four top leaders and some major lateral branches. The lower canopy is very imposing despite periodic pruning to accommodate hydro wires. When we walk, stand under, or gaze up at it we are in awe. We are in the process of naturalizing the ground under the canopy. This includes a "nurse log" which we assembled with large chunks of an old maple trunk that had grown near our house. Various native plants now nestle there. We invite you to come into the drive to enjoy its enveloping branches and the young native undergrowth.

Nominators: Barbara and John Neilson

9. London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia*)

"In Comox, this tree is at 170 Ellis St. on the east side of the street. It is a huge tree with fence either side of the trunk that is massive. It is 27 m tall and the branches extend to 20 m. It is believed that this tree was planted in 1937 by the same landscape architect who worked on the Filberg property nearby."

Nominator: Grant Cummins

10. Western Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*)

"My tree is in the Cumberland Community Forest. From Coal Creek Park (Jumbo's Cabin) walk just past the red gate and turn left. From here, walk 160 paces up the hill into the forest and look up to the left. The main stem of this wide, multi stem tree is 18 cm DBH

and 8m tall. When you first see this tree, the smooth bark looks like a gnarly, twisted arbutus, but the outer foliage reveals it to be a Yew tree. Its shape suggests a life of struggle and tenacity, but it is beautiful nonetheless.”

Nominator: Ted Grainger

Committee Note: The tangle of branches and multiple leaders signals a tree growing in the shade. The dominance of one main stem gives way to the competition of many. If you walk uphill and stay to the tight you will come across a number of yews growing in the lower canopy of the forest. Some of these multi stemmed trees are western hemlock. The moss is heavy so it’s hard to tell the difference. Look at bark and needles. The yew and hemlock are about the same shade tolerance. Note the young single stemmed red cedar; this would indicate more shade tolerance.

11. Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)

“This tree is located at 4374 Marsden Road off Lake Trail in the front near the fence. There will be a sign marking the tree’s location on the fence. It is 50 m tall and 130 cm DBH and is 63 years old. Oscar Redlick, my grandfather, was a coal miner in Cumberland and an Arborist. He traveled with his wife Elizabeth who was a Cumberland nurse, to Northern California in their VW Beetle and he dug up several Redwood seedlings bringing them across the US Border. He planted them on our property in 1958. Although they are hard to get started, every single tree has survived and they are large and healthy. We have had Foresters stop here on occasion and ask about the trees remarking how amazing they are and how good they have adjusted to living here. It was even suggested that if these Redwoods can do so well on Vancouver Island why aren't they being planted here for beauty and harvest? We would like to nominate the largest Redwood on our property to the memory of my grandfather Oscar Redlick. We would also like to honour Cathy Storey for starting the Comox Valley Tree of The Year contest. Our tree is very unique and it stands tall and proud in the Comox Valley.”

Nominator: Murray Coulter

12. Japanese Cherry (*Prunus yedoensis* ‘Akebono’)

“You can find this tree in Courtenay at Cumberland Rd and 14th Street - in the triangle. Height is approximately 8-10 m tall and 1m DBH. The spread of the branches fill the triangle. It is older than 1998! I moved to Courtenay in Aug. of 1998 and this tree blossomed so beautifully in the Spring of 1999. Every year since, it's the tree that tells me truly warm Spring has really arrived in the Comox Valley.”

Nominator: Cathy I. Ross

13. Mystery Maple (Acer ?)

"This tree is in Courtenay at 1605 Willemar Ave in the SE corner along the fence. It is 10m tall. This tree has every possible Fall colour of leaf you can imagine (yellow, red, green, brown, orange - beautiful) - this marks the beginning of Fall for me in the Comox Valley."

Nominator: Cathy I. Ross

Committee note: We have made efforts to truly identify this beauty but it remains a mystery. If you happen to know the type of maple it is please let us know.

14. Golden Weeping Willow (Salix alba tristis)

View these trees in Lewis Park in Courtenay, on the north side of 5th St. "These four trees were planted on a boulevard on Huband Road around 1980 in Mr. Mottershead's yard. When the 9 inch gas pipeline that services the entire Vancouver Island came down Huband road, he had to remove these lovely immature trees. His daughter, Sandy, worked for the City Of Courtenay and the family donated the trees to the city. They were transplanted to Lewis Park around 1989 and they have flourished ever since. I live on Huband Road and watched Mr. Mottershead lovingly take care of these trees. It is so wonderful to see these trees grow and change over the years and to see how much the city does to take care of them."

Nominator: Heather Pitman

15. Black Cottonwood (Populus trichocarpa)

"Look to 4708 Headquarters Rd (nearest street address, north of tree). This tree is protected as there is an eagle nest present. It is about 30m tall and .9m DBH."

Nominator: Jim Boulter

16. Western Hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla)

"Travel to Seal Bay Park, March Road entrance: from the entrance go west on the Western Hemlock trail (where the trail forks keep to the left) about 433 meters. The tree is about 8-10 m tall and multi stemmed with the largest stem 18cm DBH. This tree is unique and shows the artistry and perseverance of nature. It grows out of a nursery stump that is disintegrating beneath it. When coming upon this tree traveling from West to East you are startled to thinking that there is a deer on the path and then the path veers around the tree."

Nominator: Jane Wilson

Committee notes: logging in this area left many stumps where the western hemlocks have germinated and grown. Where is the mother tree providing the seed? What is the dominant tree in this forest and what are the understory trees?

17. Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

Look for this tree in Nymph Falls Nature Park at 4481 Forbidden Plateau Rd. For the fastest route, take the main trail from the parking lot, follow the Main Falls Trail to the left and then the smaller Boots Only trail that goes off to the right. On the River Trail, this distinctive tree is 35 m tall and about 1m DBH. "It is approximately 150 years old. As nurses, we recognize the value in this tree as part of an ecosystem that is crucial to the health of our planet and of its inhabitants. Trees allow for the capture of CO2 and build our climate resilience. This tree is "Standing Tall and Proud" and we are grateful for its contribution to the health and well-being of our community members. We acknowledge the wisdom of the K'omox First Nations and reflect on the privilege we hold of living on this land."

Nominator: Comox Valley Nurses for Health and the Environment

Committee Note: Look at the stumps left from logging as you hike towards the nominee. In heavy brush seedlings find the low competition on top of a stump a better location for success than the forest floor.

18. Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*)

"It is located on the back of 1421 McPhee Ave in Courtenay (Cedar Grove Building Products) and access to view it is from the Rotary Trail north off of 17th St. Not sure if it is protected, other than they just did renovations on the property and retained the tree. It is about 5 m tall and 8cm DBH and is special as an arbutus tree doesn't usually grow in this area."

Nominator: Jeff Hampton

19. Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*)

"This tree is also located on the E&N railway right of way (Rotary Trail) at the back corner of properties 1421 and 1491 McPhee Ave. "There used to be a railway siding there many years ago. It is about 7m tall. The fact that it is an arbutus tree makes it special as they are not that common this far north on Vancouver Island."

Nominator: Jeff Hampton

20. Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*)

"This tree is located on the property line between 910 17th St. and the E&N railway right of way and about 10 feet from the sidewalk. It is about 15 m tall and is 84 years old. I used to live across the road, growing up. I was admiring the tree about 1970 or there about. The owner of the property was nearby and in our conversation he said that he had planted the tree in 1937. I asked how long he had been living there and he replied "walked up the tracks in '21 and decided to settle here". His name was Bill

Farmere, he passed away in 1978 aged 98. I have in my possession a newspaper article with his picture taken in 1975.”

Nominator: Jeff Hampton

21. Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

“**This tree is growing at 468 Anderton Rd** in Comox next to a "this property to be developed " sign. It is mentioned in the arborist's report within the developer's report to Town council. It is 140 cm DBH and its height is approximately twice as high as the power line. This tree is special to me as it represents the disappearing old trees in this community as it stands beside the developer's sign awaiting its fate.”

Nominator: Mel McLachlan

Committee note: the Town of Comox Parks says that "this tree is a priority for protection and retention during the development".

22. Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*)

“Find this tree in Courtenay at the St. Andrew's Church Cemetery off Dingwall Rd. Turn left off Dingwall onto McQuillan. It is on the northeast corner of the cemetery just inside the corner gate and is marked by a small birdhouse. The tree is about 30 m tall and the trunk is a massive 168 DBH. I believe the church aims to protect them along with the fact that they are protected by City Bylaw (provided not hazardous). It is a remnant grove of older Garry oaks. Wouldn't it have been spectacular to see a whole landscape of these beasts?”

Nominator: Nancy Gothard

23. Bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

This tree is in Morrison Park, on the trail that connects Lake Trail middle school and École Puntledge Park Elementary. Go to the north west behind Lake Trail school, follow the path at the top of the hill down to the sports field and stay to the west edge of the field. Look for the little wooden foot bridge to cross the creek and it is not far into the forest. It is very tall (about 36 m tall and 135 cm DBH) and is marked with a sign. “This tree is very popular because it has a swing! My learners (division 20) guessed that it is about 100 years old I organized a mini version of your Tree of the Year contest in my grade 6 class (division 20 at École Puntledge Park) and learners voted for this Bigleaf maple tree. I told my learners that my nomination would represent their voice, so I am nominating their choice: the Bigleaf maple tree with the swing. My grade 6 learners love this tree for many reasons. Here are the reasons they wrote down: because it is big, because it has a twin, because I have known it since Kindergarten, because it has a swing that we can use and have fun with, because it is majestic, because it has ferns

and moss that grow on it, because it's very big, because it has always been there and I have a lot of memories with friends there. This tree is so special to me because the 400 kids at the school love this tree so much and I do too.”

Nominator: Marion Delude

24. Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

“Look for 7639 Tozer Rd, in Fanny Bay (Middle of driveway turnaround). Sandra and John Vanderwel are protecting this tree which has a DBH of about 1 m., is approximately 15 m tall and is 15 m wide. It is over 120 years old .This magnificently elegant mature tree has stood at the bottom of Tozer Road on Ships Point in Fanny Bay before there was a ‘Tozer Road’. Planted by one of the pioneering families this tree has witnessed much: many surrounding massive fir trees logged, horse and wagon paths become paved roads, sheep and cattle farms come and go. It has grown for a 100 years alongside apple trees and now is left to shade the ‘farmhouse’ that was rebuilt in 1920. A resting or nesting spot for the multitude of birds that frequent the adjacent bird sanctuary, it also serves as cool shade for passers-by on a hot summer’s day. But really, it is the grandeur of this living creature that forces us to pause, to appreciate and most importantly to respect.”

Nominator: Pam Lengyel

25. Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*)

“This tree is on Veterans Memorial Parkway (opposite Art Knapps). It is approximately 10 m tall and 40 cm DBH and is a healthy tree with character. I don’t know much about the history of this particular tree. Growing up in the valley my mother always spoke about her love of the Arbutus tree and so we were always on the lookout for these trees. There are not a lot of Arbutus trees in the valley but on our trips through town we are always on the lookout for any Arbutus trees we can find. These are considered a native species in British Columbia and are found mostly on the coast of BC and Vancouver Island. You can purchase these trees from the Streamside Native Plant nursery in Bowser and I am currently growing three in my yard as well as growing many from seeds. I’ve been told in the past that these are hard to grow because they like very little water but I find that if you can get them established after a few years they will takeoff on their own and need no watering other than what Mother Nature gives them. This tree is special to us because it was spared when they built the parkway and spared when they built the fence beside it.”

Nominator: A. Bennett

Committee note: There are many brown leaves on this tree which is likely indicative of various fungus diseases arbutus are prone to or winter damage. These leaves will fall off and the new leaves will replace them.

26. Western red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

“This leaning cedar sits holding the bank together against peak flow times. A nurse log which supports huckleberries and young hemlocks lies nearby and the riparian area quickly rises behind the cedar into a maturing second-growth forest climbing up the ridge. Its boughs hug the creek just as it would have when salmon still visited the gravel banks the tree calls home. Maybe one day it will have salmon jumping over its branches once again. This tree is not protected and it’s in danger of being logged. Its measurements are: 45.8m tall and 103cm in diameter. It is more than 100 yrs. old for sure. This tree grows in the area called Project Perseverance that Cumberland Community Forest stewardship group has been fundraising to buy. Recently, Hancock was found with machinery ready to cut in the area and the situation is now at a standstill while the company gives the community some time to emergency fund raise the requisite funds. I am a Cumberland resident and am hoping to raise awareness (and funds) for Project Perseverance so that the entire length of Perseverance Creek can be protected and restored. It is a beautiful area and this tree shows perseverance itself.”

Committee Note: To our knowledge, this tree can only be viewed by crossing private land which we cannot encourage. However, its nomination for Tree of the Year is being honored. When this land is purchased by Cumberland Community Forest we will all be able to visit this western red cedar and the forest ecosystem it thrives in.

Nominator: Delwyn Marcoux

27. Douglas fir. (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

“Find this tree at the entrance to the campsites in Miracle Beach Park; you can't miss it! (If you are in a vehicle park in the day use lot and walk across the road to this tree) This tree is protected by Miracle Beach Provincial Park. Its DBH is 2.06 m and it is about 55 m tall. It must be 200-300 years old. This tree is a local version of "Big Lonely Doug. It stands alone at the campsite entrance, greeting visitors. Hundreds of campers and park visitors walk right by it every year on their way to the beach. It is a very public tree in a public place, but gives us a point of reference to connect with the history of old growth forest on Vancouver Island.”

Nominator: Jocie Brooks