

WINTER 2022/2023



President's Message

Alicia Aitchison

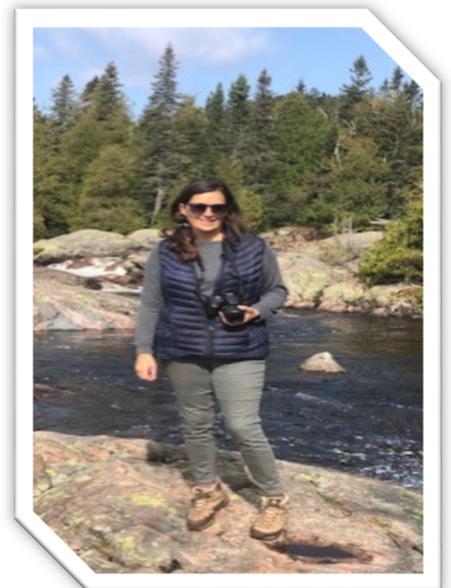
"Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever"

In October, the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) held its Annual General Meeting. At the AGM we heard what great strides were made this year towards achieving this mission.

Some of the highlights include:

- 70.2% of the Bruce Trail is now on permanently protected land
- 14 new protected natural areas are preserved forever
- 1376 km of Trail maintained and ready to be explored with 4.6 km of trail removed from roads (almost 1 km of this is in Niagara!)
- 89 species of conservation concern recorded on BTC managed land and 73 BTC protected natural areas added to national conservation database!

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2022-2023 NBTC

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President's Message

From Page One

The meeting closed with a celebration of volunteers which included, for our club:

- Vince Zvonar, recognized for 10 years of service on BTC Committee Roles, most recently as part of the Land Stewardship Committee. *Congratulations, Vince!*
- The Tom East Award. This is awarded annual to the Bruce Trail Club completing the most significant trail project that places the Trail on the Optimum Route or adds a worthwhile new side trail. Our club managed to do both this year with the two new side trails at Louth Conservation Area, and, through the hard work of our Landowner Relations & Trail Development volunteers, as well as the generous permission of our private landowners, the removal of the trail from busy Ridge Road and onto the escarpment! *Congratulations to Rick, Klari, and the army of volunteers that worked to complete these wonderful projects!*

If you weren't able to participate in the AGM, the full BTC Annual Impact Report 2022 is available at <https://brucetrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BTC-Annual-Impact-Report-2022.pdf>.

What has been accomplished this year is nothing short of amazing! Here in Niagara, volunteer engagement continues to grow, allowing us to achieve great things. One of my personal highlights has been working with our new team of Landowner Ambassadors - volunteers who play a key role in supporting the Club's goal of working effectively with our private landowners to maintain access to the Trail. It is inspiring to see so many people step up to be involved and see what we have already started to accomplish. Thank you to each of you and to all our amazing volunteers! If you are interested in joining us, we have many volunteer opportunities. Reach out for more information. ◀

Join the NBTC Board of Directors!

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club is currently seeking volunteer candidates for three upcoming vacancies on the club Board of Directors:

- Vice-President
- Landowner Relations Director
- Public Relations Director

If interested in learning more about the roles or to apply, please visit <http://niagarabrucetrail.club/wp/volunteer/> or contact Jessica Ranalli at nbt4membership@gmail.com.

St. Catharines Road Runners & Walkers Front Page Photo

On August 27th, 2022, the NBTC accepted a \$10,000 donation from the St. Catharines Road Runners & Walkers during their AGM held at Burgoyne Woods. This donation came from the proceeds of the Niagara Ultra Race which was held on June 18, 2022. The NBTC happily provided 15 volunteers to serve as course marshals during the race. This donation marks over \$100,000 donated by the SCRRW over the past 20 years. The SCRRW's continued support of the Bruce Trail is very much appreciated!

Pictured (left to right): Henri Ragetlie (Race Director), Jessica Ranalli (NBTC Volunteer Coordinator), Rob Lord (SCRRW Past-President)

Hike in Style with BTC T-Shirts



The Tom East Award, from left, Vince Zvonar, Klari Kalkman, Rick Waters, and Alicia Aitchison



Meghan Croll, BTC Volunteer Coordinator, presents NBTC Board Member Vince Zvonar with the 10-Year BTC Volunteer Award

NBTC Merchandise

- Men's & Women's' Long-sleeve, wick away T-shirts \$30
 - "Where the Blazes are We" short sleeve shirt \$25 (Men's and Women's - S, M, L, XL)
 - Tube Scarves \$15 and Bumper Stickers \$5
- Taxes included. See website for details on pickup options or shipping

To order: <http://niagarabrucetrail.club/wp/nbtcmernchandise/NBTC>

Trail Maintenance

RICK WATERS

TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT



The wood shown here is a donation from Gaulds Nursery. This wood was off cuts from deck construction and has been made useable for Blaze Boards. Jacques Boilard has already started the process of cutting the wood to size for 100 turn blaze boards and 34 single blaze boards. Next job is painting.

We must thank Rob Stevens for the introduction to Gaulds Nursery who have been very supportive to the Niagara Bruce Trail Club.



Above: Vince Zvonar clearing a tree from the main Bruce Trail below Ridge Rd in Grimsby

Left: Rob Stevens clearing a tree off the General Brock Side Trail



The **St. Catharines Road Runners** were out in force on the trail Sunday, October 30th, picking up garbage.

Henri Ragetlie, on the right, organized the Sunday morning garbage cleanup along the trail in Niagara, between Fireman's Park and Warner Rd.

Thanks to Henri and all the runners for helping to keep the Bruce Trail in great shape.

- Rick Waters, Trail Maintenance and Development



On Sunday, October 23rd, 14 volunteers from the NBTC helped at a water station for the **Niagara Falls International Marathon**. The race organization has been a long-standing supporter of the NBTC, making many donations over the years. We had some beautiful weather, and the volunteers had a great time supporting and cheering on over 600 runners.

- Jessica Ranalli, Membership & Volunteer Coordinator

Bruce Trail Day 2022

MARGARET NORTHFIELD

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY
DIRECTOR

Over 80 happy hikers and supporters of the Bruce Trail participated in Niagara's Bruce Trail Day on Sunday, October 2nd at Niagara College, Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus. Thanks to Niagara College for their ongoing support by lending us the greenhouse classroom and supplying great snacks! Thank you to the wonderful volunteers who led four different hikes. There was something for everyone - an easy hike, a longer hike, a nature hike, and a family hike. T-shirts, neck scarves and bumper stickers were sold. Sales help us to support our club so we can continue to do our work of maintaining the trail, doing bio-diversity projects, purchasing land, and promoting members. ◀



Bruce Trail Day 2022

Bruce Trail BTC CEO Michael McDonald participated in our nature hike, led by BTC Ecologist, Mara McHaffie

Hiking 101

MARGARET NORTHFIELD

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY
DIRECTOR

Thirteen people participated in our Fall 2022 Hiking 101 course in October. Over three Sunday afternoons, this group of keen participants focused on trail etiquette, clothing, equipment, trail food, blaze reading, membership benefits, and all things Bruce Trail. They had three glorious sunny days of 1.5hr hiking to develop the habit of hiking.

Thank you to Diane Marlatt, Ken Martin, and Jacques Boilard for volunteering for this worthwhile project. On your next hike, if you happen to meet one of the new hikers, make sure you give them a warm welcome. ◀

Hikig 101: Hikers in Queenston



Update from the NBTC Biodiversity Committee

DID YOU KNOW?

Dog-Strangling Vine is an invasive perennial herbaceous plant in the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae). It is spreading rapidly and causing damage to ecosystems in southern Ontario.

Dog-Strangling Vine invasions can harm biodiversity in a number of ways.

- It forms dense stands that overwhelm and crowd out native plants and young trees and prevents forest regeneration.
- Leaves and roots may be toxic to livestock.
- Deer and other browsing animals avoid it, which can increase grazing pressure on more palatable native plants.
- It also threatens the monarch butterfly!

THE GOOD NEWS

SO FAR, we have not found Dog Strangling Vine along the Niagara Bruce Trail; however, it is as close as the Iroquoia Section!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Learn how to identify Dog Strangling Vine and if you do find it along the trail, report it to us immediately so we can remove it and prevent the spread throughout our trail section before it starts!

The photos show Dog Strangling Vine in its various stages to help with identification.

Photo 1: European Swallow-Wort dried pods

In the fall, Dog-Strangling Vine can be recognized by the leftover seed pods that have split open and often remain on the plant through the winter. They resemble Milkweed pods, but are thinner, smoother, and often dangling.

Photo by Joanne Redwood.



Photo 2: European Swallow-Wort flowers

Dog-strangling vine produces small pink, or maroon flowers with 5 petals in the summer (usually June-July).

Photo by Laura Tuohy.

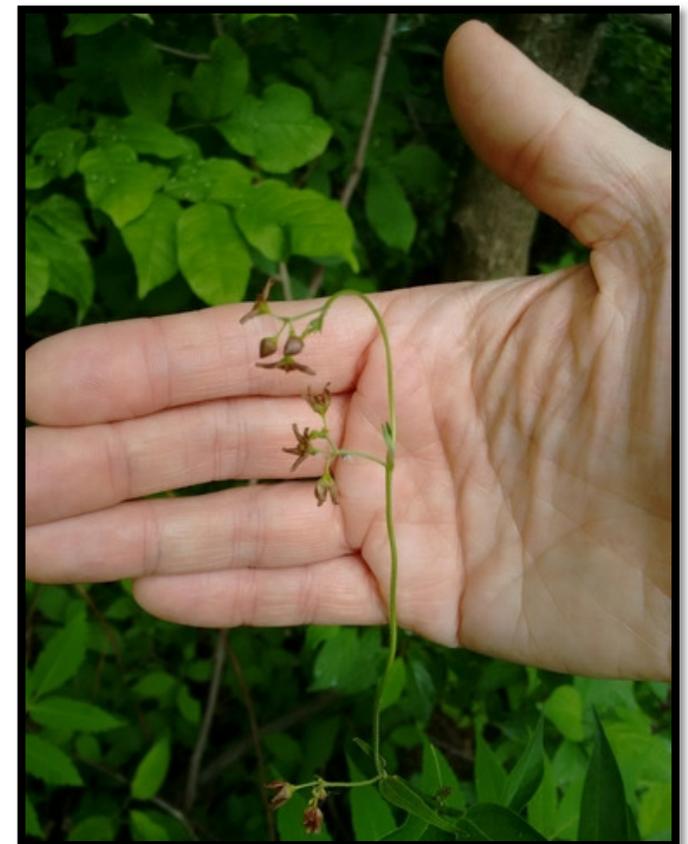


Photo 3: European Swallow-Wort leaves

Dog-strangling vine has glossy green leaves that taper to a point and emerge in pairs along the stem.

Photo by Richard Smythe.



Photo 4: European Swallow-Wort pods

Newly formed seed pods are quite thin and are a glossy light green. As they mature, they will turn brown and dry out, eventually splitting open to disperse the fluffy seeds within, which resemble milkweed seeds.

Photo by Fraser Gibson.



Hey, NBTC Members!

Have you moved or changed your email address? Please be sure to notify the Bruce Trail Conservancy to ensure you stay connected.

Phone email: 1-800-665-4453 or email info@brucetrail.org

Other Resources:

- <https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/>
- <https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/invasive-plants/species/>
- <http://www.invadingspecies.com/>

For More Information

Please contact the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711.

- The Landowner's Guide to Controlling Invasive Woodland Plants.
<https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GuideControlInvasiveWoodPlantsWEB.pdf>
- A Landowner's Guide to Managing and Controlling Invasive Plants in Ontario
https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/35266_LandOwnerGuide_June262013_FINAL_WEB.pdf
- Grow Me Instead: Beautiful Non-Invasive Plants for Your Garden.
<https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/grow-me-instead/>

Invasive Plants -- the Great Escape Artists

Submitted by Mary-lyn Hopper (Master Gardener)

The day is fine, or not, and as we trudge toward our destination the woods and fields provide a welcome backdrop. Yet how aware are we of what plant matter is in the natural areas that we pass? Many of us are becoming more adept at recognizing massive stands of vegetative interlopers along the side of the trail (garlic mustard, greater celandine). We are also becoming more aware of the native plants that line the trails, especially the ethereals of spring (trillium, jack in the pulpit, spring beauty), and the keystone plants of fall (asters and goldenrods}. We appreciate areas where there is clearly a lot of diversity in the plant matter, yet how often do we stop to contemplate on what is missing when the diversity is lacking, and ask "Why?"

It is becoming more and more apparent that common non-native garden plants, originally imported for their culinary, medicinal, or aesthetic properties, are migrating to the woods. Because these plants have no native predators, they spread quickly through underground root systems that strangle out other vegetation, or they have developed survival techniques, such as adding toxins to the soil, which inhibit growth by other plants, giving them free rein.

Many of these plants continue to be sold in garden centers throughout North America for home gardens. While some are problematic even within home gardens, others are popular choices, which seem to cause few problems. Often, we hear "It does not spread in my yard." It is only when we see a monoculture of the plant in a natural area that we are truly aware of how some plants can be managed within home landscapes but are spread vigorously by natural means, such as wind dispersal and seed deposit by animals that eat the berries, nuts, or fruit, or by intentional plantings that creep into the natural areas.

I believe that hikers have a role to play in protecting the areas which are critical to our sport. Not only can we rethink what is in our own gardens, by eliminating invasives and planting natives, but we can spread the word.

Some of the common escape artists are listed below. I have only focused on wildflowers and grasses. You can find more info about these plants, as well as invasive shrubs, aquatic plants, and trees in "**Grow Me Instead Document:**" which can be found at Ontarioinvasiveplants.ca.

<u>Invasive</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Invasive</u>	<u>Alternative</u>
<i>Periwinkle</i>	Wild Geranium	<i>English Ivy</i>	Wild Strawberry
<i>Lily of the Valley</i>	Starry Solomon's Seal	<i>Bugleweed</i>	Wild Ginger
<i>Miscanthus Grass</i>	Switchgrass Indian Grass Pennsylvania Sedge Big Bluestem Little Bluestem Bottle Grass Ivory Sedge	<i>Creeping Jenny</i>	Bloodroot
		<i>Orange Day Lily</i>	Canada Anemone
		<i>Goutweed</i>	Michigan Lily
		<i>Yellow Archangel</i>	Purple Coneflower
		<i>Wintercreeper</i>	Large Leaf Aster
			Zig Zag
			Goldenrod
			Foamflower

I have used many of the recommendations in my own yard. I have found wild strawberry to be a fast-spreading groundcover, which can be used as under-planting for taller perennial and shrubs, reducing the need for mulch and reducing weeding. Other plants took a few years to become established, such as wild ginger and foamflower. ◀

Periwinkle



Orange Daylily



Photos from Creative Commons



Enjoy Nature

NBTC Volunteers work to preserve & maintain the trail for everyone, forever. You can support the TRAIL by donating at <http://niagarabrucetrail.club/wp/donate/>

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THE Grapevine

Newsletter of the Bruce Trail Conservancy Niagara Club

The Grapevine is the newsletter of the Niagara Bruce Club, one of the nine member clubs of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. **The Grapevine** appears four times a year.

NBTC Members are invited to submit stories and photos. Copy due date for the Spring 2023 issue is January 31, 2023.

For editorial guidelines and for rates to advertise, contact btcgrapevine@gmail.com

BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY MISSION
Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.