TACKLING INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES IN HIGH PARK, TORONTO

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OUTLINE

- HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE RESTORATION HILLSIDE
- OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT
 SHORT AND LONG TERM OBJECTIVES
- THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- CITY OF TORONTO, PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE WORK

Children's Garden, High Park circa 2010



Images accessed from: http://childrensecoprograms.ca



Aerial view of the ABC learning garden, 1998

The Children's Teaching Kitchen, 2012

Images accessed from: http://childrensecoprograms.ca



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HILLSIDE

- 1998: First year of the site in use, approximately 6 beds spread across the hill
- 1999: Involvement of Volunteer Stewardship Program (VSP) on Earth Day to plant additional species beside original site and program staff and participants control weeds and maintain garden bed edges to avoid invasive species
- 2000: Additional small plots were added on Earth Day planting by VSP, except turf grass was not removed and has taken over and started to impact many native plants that were planted

Children's Garden Volunteers



Photograph taken in 1998



Derived from City of Toronto, High Park Children's Eco Programs, circa 2001

Hillside Project Goals

High Park – Children's Garden

- Work to integrate native planting sites into the broader context of restoration in the park
- Introduce native plants to create a garden to be used as a teaching tool (native species, biodiversity, restoration, habitat)



Photograph taken by Gera Dillian

Native Plantings

Shrubs

Sumac New Jersey Tea

Grasses

Big Bluestem Little Bluestem Indian Grass Poverty Oatgrass Red Fescues Hair Grass Panic Grass



Wildflowers

Common Milkweed Azure Aster Harebell Woodland Sunflower Canada Hawkweed Cylindric Blazing Star Wild Lupine Foxglove Beardtongue Blackeyed Susan **Cup Plant** Canada Goldenrod Gray Goldenrod Hoary Vervain

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

- Complete an updated inventory
- Promote environmental awareness via education and outreach
- Major invasive plants of interest:
 - Dog-Strangling Vine (Vincetoxicum rossicum)
 - Common Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica)
 - Japanese Hedge Parsley (Impatiens glandulifera)
 - Himalayan Balsam (Torilis japonica)

Inventory, Summer 2015

TREE SPECIES

- Red Oak
- Red Maple
- Choke Cherry
- Manitoba Maple
- Alternate Leaf Dogwood

GRASS SPECIES

- Big Bluestem
- Little Bluestem
- Indian Grass

... and more!

PLANT SPECIES

- Dog Strangling Vine
- Common Buckthorn
- Himalayan Balsam
- Pearly Everlasting
- Butter and Eggs
- Fragrant Sumac
- Sky Blue Aster
- Wild Aster
- Black eyed Susan
- Common Evening Primrose
- Wild Bergamot
- Showy Tick Trefoil

.... and more!

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



DSV Removal July 2015

July 2015



Japanese Hedge Parsley Removal August 2015



Photographs taken by S. Kelly Kearns (left) and Nicole Grgic (right)

DSV and Common Buckthorn



Photograph taken by Nicole Grgic



Photographs taken by Nicole Grgic

SOCIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS



LONGTERM OBJECTIVES

- Create an educational workbook for various age groups on the importance of protecting native savannah ecosystems
- Design and implement public signs on the hillside at the Children's Garden

Image accessed from: http:// www.highparktoronto.com/map.php



GOING FORWARD

- Establish an educational workbook by December 2015
- Create an outdoor teaching site for children and adults
- Restore the hillside by managing invasive plant species, and create habitats for native flora and fauna



Image taken by Nicole Grgic

THANK YOU!

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"|t's not about what it is, it's about what it can become."



COTO SULTA