

# Communities, Connections and Celebrations: West Kildonan Horticultural Society's Commitment to the Seven Oaks Arboretum

Community Group: West Kildonan Horticultural Society (WKHS)

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*Figure 1 Perennial bed at the Arboretum*

The modern incarnation (1950) of the West Kildonan Horticultural Society has deep and growing roots in the community. The society's guardianship of the Seven Oaks Arboretum (Partridge Ave. and Andrews St.) began with the inception of the park and arboretum in 1970. The WKHS refurbished the arboretum under the City of Winnipeg, Adopt-A-Park Scheme in 2000. Two years later, further improvements were made under the Forest Enhancement Project. Our current project is procuring a permanent water source to maintain the arboretum gardens.

The arboretum, nestled between apartment complexes, a personal care home, fire hall and housing is a well-used community sanctuary. This haven has evolved into different areas of enjoyment, with a large perennial bed, shrub beds, butterfly garden, rose bed and a large green space for play.

Biannually, a team of volunteers from our club weed, trim, plant and replace greenery as needed. An active partnership with the parks department has led to new seating areas, wheelchair accessible picnic tables and secure garbage disposal containers.



*Figure 2 Clean up volunteers - spring 2018*

Our annual Fiesta Day Plant Sale is held the first Saturday each June at the arboretum. Monies raised are for other community projects such as ImagineAbility, KYAC, and Habitat for Humanity to name a few. After the sale, remaining plants find homes in the arboretum flower beds, at the fire hall, the Luther Care Home and the West Kildonan Community Club.



*Figure 3 Fiesta Day - Plant sale*

In 2017, the arboretum was the cornerstone of the society's Canada 125 celebrations.

The WKHS recognized *Past and Present Members* by creating a memorial garden, with red and white roses. Local residents, members of the WKHS and participating city partners were invited to the public dedication.

A butterfly garden was incorporated into the perennial landscaping to promote insect diversity while adding another level of interest to the border.



*Figure 4 Rose Bed Dedication*

In recognition of the Battle at Vimy Ridge, the club, in partnership with the Legion Branch #30 (Hartford Ave. and Main St.) planted an authentic Vimy Ridge Oak at the arboretum.



*Figure 5 Vimy Ridge Oak Tree Dedication*

MaryAnn Mihychuk, M.P. obtained this rare tree for the dedication held on September 14, 2017. After a colour guard and a military band, the dignitaries spoke about Vimy Ridge, Canadian participation in war and peace, as well as setting a living tribute for the future.

Sadly, the destruction of the Vimy Ridge Oak this spring illustrates the challenges of tending a public space. Positive feedback from the community and the tenacity of our membership sustains our resolve to continue to find a replacement for this historic tree. As of this week, MaryAnn Mihychuk was able to obtain another authentic Vimy Ridge Oak.

The West Kildonan Horticultural Society's commitment to the Seven Oaks Arboretum exemplifies our motto, "Rooted in the Past, Growing Now, Flowering in the Future".

For more information see our webpage [www.wkhorticultural.ca](http://www.wkhorticultural.ca)

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