



RBG wants you to ‘fall’ for biodiversity at upcoming Bioblitz event

Visitors to Royal Botanical Gardens can help document over 1,500 species of flora and fauna

Burlington, ON, September 19, 2019 - On September 20 and 21, visitors to Royal Botanical Gardens' (RBG) Arboretum can join the team from the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System, along with expert naturalists to document the areas biodiversity at Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System BioBlitz. The weekend event also features a native plant sale and guided hikes.

Lying between the Niagara Escarpment and the shores of Lake Ontario, this area of Southern Ontario has nearly one fifth of Canada's biodiversity and is home to over 50 species at risk. The EcoPark System's 1,900 hectares of natural lands within Burlington and Hamilton are vital green spaces for these plants and animals.

BioBlitz allows experts and non-experts alike to come together to document and verify all the species they can find in a 24-hour period. In the last two years of this project, nearly 5,000 observations of over 1,500 species have been made by 111 citizen scientists. This year's event includes:

Friday, September 20; Arboretum: Starting bright and early and extending all day, experienced naturalists will be blitzing Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System properties to identify as many wild things as possible.

Friday, September 20 and Saturday, September 21; Arboretum: On Friday evening and throughout the morning and afternoon of Saturday, the public is invited to join an in an expert on a guided hike for an opportunity to identify unique plant and wildlife

Saturday, September 21; Arboretum: From 9am to 3pm on Saturday, September 21, people are invited to check out local plant vendors and community groups at Royal Botanical Gardens' Arboretum (16 Old Guelph Rd, Hamilton).

Additional details about this year's Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System BioBlitz and Plant Sale can be found here: www.rbg.ca/bioblitz

About the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System

The EcoPark System is the last intact ecological connection between Lake Ontario wetlands and the Niagara Escarpment, an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It is a landscape of protected lands, open spaces, urban development, and other uses at the western tip of Lake Ontario, centred around Cootes Paradise Marsh in Hamilton and Burlington, Ontario. It is an alliance of nine land owning agencies including, the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Conservation Halton, Halton Region, City of Hamilton, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Hamilton Naturalists' Club, City of Burlington, McMaster University, and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz brings together taxonomic experts, citizen scientists and the general public to inventory all species (plants, animals, fungi, and more) in an area over a 24-hour period. Participants record all the organisms they find, and then experts verify their identity.

The species records are compiled into a single data set, the species list, which provides a snapshot of the biodiversity in that location on that date.

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For more information please visit www.rbg.ca/bioblitz or contact:

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