

## Editorial

The University of British Columbia will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its charter in 2008. The early years were spent in temporary urban accommodations on the Fairview Slopes, which now includes the site of the Vancouver Hospital. By 1915, when students were first enrolled for UBC degrees, the founder of the UBC Botanical Garden, John Davidson, had established a botanical garden in Coquitlam, an outer suburb of Vancouver. The government's plan from 1908 had been to build the new university on Point Grey, and Davidson was determined to create a botanical garden on the site, indeed that the whole campus would be a botanical garden. However, construction was delayed by WWI and it was not until the early 1920s that Davidson was able to bring plants to begin the campus plantings. By this time Frank Buck, whose work is the subject of the paper in this issue by Clive Justice, was planning the landscape for the UBC campus.

It is not clear whether Buck and Davidson actively cooperated in any way, but in hindsight Davidson's plan for the garden site was always somewhat pre-emptive. Several times during the 1920s and 1930s his botanical plantings, as well as some of Buck's horticultural materials, were dug up without notice by the university's grounds staff, but there always seemed to be enough plant material to allow proper teaching of plant taxonomy. Over time, the campus and botanical garden became synonymous, at least in the minds of some of the botanical and horticultural faculty and staff.

By 1968, the university had made the formal decision to create a separate property for the Botanical Garden and the campus landscape became the responsibility of the Physical Plant department. UBC thus resolved the inevitable tensions that exist when the culture of recreational green space meets the restricting culture of a research garden collection. The benefit for the Botanical Garden was that it could take the

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responsibility for proper maintenance of its collections. At UBC these are defined by the diversity of biological species—the garden contains more than 7,000 taxa—many of which are represented by several fully documented specimens of known geographical origin.

The campus plantings have never had the physical protection that allows survival of many species. Criteria for plant selections are determined by resilience to trampling by several thousands each day, survival of the wear and tear of random foot traffic and damage that arises when pedestrian traffic finds a shorter route than the plan for prepared paths.

Well managed campus grounds provide pleasant surroundings through which students come and go in their daily rush to classes and other campus activities. The botanical garden, even without boundary fences, provides some seclusion and respite from the hither and thither of campus life. It may be the labels or it may be the obvious organization, but a botanical garden in or close to a campus soon attracts those who seek quiet open air space and unconsciously or otherwise (assuming sunny and dry weather) find a very pleasant outdoor study carrel

The two papers in this issue of **Davidsonia** remind us of UBC's landscape history and tell us a little about one of the less technical aspects of botanical garden operations, the seed exchange. Both landscape and the seed exchange serve to remind us of the importance of having open and controlled green space. UBC is truly blessed to be able to meet those needs for its students and for its neighbours.