

The Plant Awareness Project is the brainchild of **Meg Langley**, a biologist and teacher who has lived in Golden since 1998. Meg has been a student of ethnobotany (the study of traditional plant uses) for many years and the “had” to learn to recognize numerous plants in order to sample moose calving habitat for part of her Master’s in Wildlife Biology in the early 1990s. For Meg, knowing the names and roles of plants around her has made time in nature extra special, like time spent with close friends. Hoping to share this reality and possibly ease some of the damage from the growing amount of recreation going on around Golden, Meg decided to help others learn some of the local plants.

Tracing leaves can help with learning and looking and can lead to interesting works of art. In 2018, Meg’s young friend, **Olive Furfaro**, helped with tracing plant outlines which Meg then used with various students and which inspired this project, as did the work of **Sandra Beckett**, long-time educator, and her tireless enthusiasm for teaching out-of-doors.

Using already existing posts for the signs seemed logical, so Meg recorded which plants grow at which posts and made a list of plants from what she found. Thanks go out to **Frank Bertrand** for helping out with this process, confirming plant ID and being patient.

In an effort to beautify the signs and involve others in the community, a call was put out for interested artists. The response was overwhelming and over 25 people offered to do a painting. The next few weeks were like Christmas as people sent or dropped their works off at Meg’s house by April 30, 2020. This project would not be what it is without the contributions of our talented local artists. Please visit the Artists Biography document to learn more. Extra thanks to artists **Nicole Lussier** and **Dawna-Lea** who offered to help with making outlines, choosing photos and giving comments and advice along the way.

Through EFlora, several photographers were contacted by Nicole and 4 offered any pictures they had!! Further gratitude goes to these generous professionals who shared their work so eagerly. Most of the photographs were taken by **Virginia Skilton**; others were taken by **Bryan Kelly-McArthur**, **Larry Halverson**, **Tracey Vivar**, Nicole Lussier, Meg Langley and **Doug Skilton**.

Prior to applying for funding from the CBT, the Town of Golden made a resolution supporting plant signs and thanks go out to **Jordan Petrovics** and **Jon Wilsgard** for their help and support in making this project go smoothly and easily. The Town recommended **InterMountain** from Kelowna as a company who has made other Town of Golden signs and they have been a pleasure to work with on this project. Special thanks to **Liana Cecconi** and **Cheryl Ryman** for their cheerfulness and willingness to keep making changes as requested.

Meg spent some hours combing resources to put together text describing each plant’s role in the ecosystem and/or uses by First Peoples. Every effort was made to find the name for the exact plant but, in some cases this was not possible so the name used is as close as possible. Tracking down the name of the plants in several languages involved various avenues and help from several people: **Lee Bedford** and **Caren Nagao** offered to work on the Michif (language of Métis people) names, none of which were available online. Lee contacted **Davene Dunn** who kindly contacted **Bruce Dumont**. Bruce was able to provide translations for many of the plant names. **Dana Setter** shared resources for both Metis and Secwepemc names and Meg was able to source the Blackfoot names. Ktunaxa names were taken from the First Voices website. All of the sources used are listed on the webpage in the document called “Learn more about the languages and how First Peoples used plants.” **Christine Bernier** obtained French names to add to the English and Scientific names. These names all are found on the two overview signs which were made after a suggestion from **Finley Gustafson**.

Some slight changes were made and species details were re-confirmed with help from Bryan Kelly-McCarthur and Nicole Lussier (my trusted right-hand) before the signs were printed.

Once the signs arrived, they needed to be installed and Frank Bertrand designed and made brackets to attach them to the chain-link fencing and helped with installation.

Since an in-person inaugural walk seemed unlikely, we opted to film the plants and signs and to create a video. **Kiran Gosal** volunteered to work on this aspect of the project.

**Many thanks to you all!!!**