

Walk #1

Descanso Cox Big Tree Hunt



What To Expect

Approx Time: 50 minutes

Approx Distance: 3.8 km

Difficulty: moderate with hills and roots (with an elevation change equivalent to climbing 14 flights of stairs)

Begin: Lower day-use parking lot of Descanso Bay Regional Park

This lovely walk offers water views of Descanso Bay and travels through the mature mixed-wood forest of Cox Community Park.



Winter Walkabout 2022: Trees

Trail Route & Tree Nominees

Park in the lower day-use parking lot of Descanso Bay Regional Park, pausing to enjoy views of the Park's south cove and **Janice Carruther's** favourite tree—the majestic arbutus which graces the corner of the shoreline path. This tree appears to be healthy despite many arbutus on the coast being in decline due to fungal infection and other causes.

Traveling up that path towards the more northern point, you'll pass **Tom Cameron's** nominee—a ring of a half dozen arbutus which, in Tom's words, remind him of “a ring of dancers ... dancing with abandon.” As you pause here, you may be joined by robins and waxwings, fruit-eating birds that enjoy the berries of the arbutus tree.

From the point, continue along the trail towards the Park's north cove and the campground. Continue past the trail leading to the north cove and up the road through the campground. Walk past the closed gate and continue towards Taylor Bay Road until you see the trail marker on the left for a trail that leads to Yogi Trail. Following that trail, cross Taylor Bay Road and enter Cox Community Park by way of River Place Trail. Continue walking until you see the marker for Yogi Trail and turn left.



Mary Lee Burns

Consider pausing at the bench to enjoy the forest's diversity—a mix of Douglas-fir, western hemlock, bigleaf maples, red alder and western red cedar—and the sword ferns and salal thriving on the forest floor.

Continue along Yogi Trail until the marker for River Place Trail. Turn left. **Mary Lee Burns'** nominee—the giant maple sprouting numerous shoots—is on this trail as you descend the hill on

your way to the bridge. This maple may have thrived after its Douglas-fir neighbours were logged, leaving it with more sunlight to grow and thrive.

At the bridge, keep to the right on Mallett Creek Trail. As you approach the pond, keep an eye out for **Paula Gray's** nominee on the right - a spectacular moss-covered bigleaf maple. With bigleaf maples carrying a greater load of moss than any other tree species in Coastal British Columbia, you may also notice canopy roots—



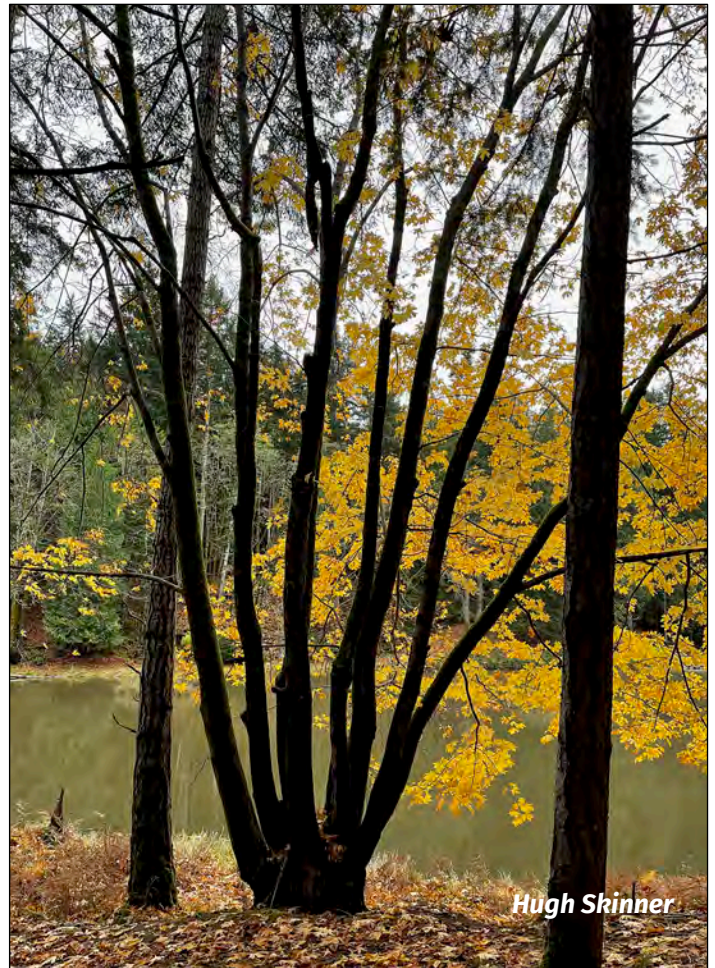
Paula Gray

moss layers so thick that they form a soil in which plants can root and grow.

If you pause at the bench overlooking the pond, take the opportunity to enjoy a view of **Hugh Skinner's** nominee—the nine-limbed bigleaf maple—

that overhangs the pond. And if you're up for a challenge, try locating two of GaLTT's designated Big Trees from the Big Tree Registry: a western hemlock, located west of the pond on Mallett Creek Trail at 49.18248 degrees latitude and 123.85001 degrees longitude and a grand fir, also located on Mallett Creek Trail, and east of the pond, at latitude 49.18262 degrees and longitude 123.84679 degrees.

Continue on the trail, keeping to the left at trail forks and following the trail markers towards Taylor Bay Road. Cross Taylor Bay Road and enter the main entrance to Descanso Bay Regional Park. Follow the road back down to the lower day-use parking lot.



Hugh Skinner