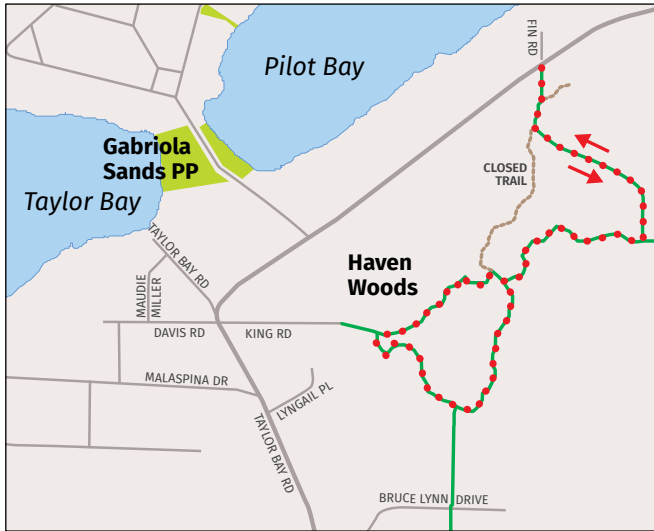


# Walk #5

## Heavenly Haven Woods



### What To Expect

*Approx Time:* 50 mins

*Approx Distance:* 3 km

*Difficulty:* moderate.; some steady inclines and rough roots.

*Begin:* park on the shoulder of Berry Point road near the striped barber pole at the Fin Road sign.

This beautiful walk through classic Coastal Douglas fir forest into Haven Woods is provided for us by two generous land holders who signed GaLTT trail licences and allow us to walk on their properties. Can you spot four fairy doors along the vanilla leaf loop?

### Trail Route

The brown trail sign at the start of this walk indicates that the trail begins on a Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) road allowance before entering private property on a trail licence (indicated eventually by green signs). Can you identify the seven species of trees that grow in this forest including western red cedar, grand fir, Douglas-fir, hemlock, red alder, big leaf maple and arbutus?

Follow the main trail, ignoring a private path to the left and continuing on until a signpost directs you toward King Road and Cox Park. Do not enter the now closed trail—the trails were rerouted to ensure privacy for the family that generously gives us access to their land.

Walk slightly uphill through a tunnel of sword ferns. At the intersection turn right toward King Road. (If you turn left here, you will follow a trail licence up to the corner of Balsam and Tamarack in the Phase 4 area.) Passing through an area of windfall, listen for Pileated woodpeckers who are active here, before following the fence line. Pause to admire the magnificent big leaf maple on the left, one of the largest on Gabriola.

At the intersection, turn left, signposted toward Cox Park. You are now entering the Haven Woods Vanilla-Leaf Meadow loop. Haven Woods was named by the property's former



## 2026 Winter Walkabout: Favourite Trees Revisited

Trees were nominated by GaLTT members in 2021

owner, Harriet Thomas, in honour of The Haven—a place that was beloved to her and had been her first introduction to the island.<sup>1</sup> Public access to its trails was granted when Ms Thomas entered into a trail licence with GaLTT.<sup>2</sup> When this property changed ownership in 2018, GaLTT was delighted that the new landowners continued this generous public access with new trail licences. Please respect any trails marked as private when you walk through this beautiful forest.



As you walk along this section of the trail, keep an eye out for a large stump on the left. The notch in its side indicates that this tree was cut using the springboard method (where a logger stood on a springboard wedged into this notch to fall the tree).

About five minutes along the trail, watch for five fairy doors nominated by **Lou Skinner**. Lou admires the fairies' diversity of tree selection with their first home in the base of

an arbutus tree, followed closely by another in a red alder, the third at the base of a bigleaf maple on the edge of the Vanilla-Leaf Meadow, and the final two in the mossy base of a bigleaf maple just past the trail on the left that takes you to Cox Park.

Consider returning in the spring to enjoy the beauty of the Vanilla-Leaf Meadow. Vanilla-leaf is mostly found in moist, shady forests, glades, openings and forest edges and especially along streambanks. When in bloom, these leaves of the vanilla-leaf form a nearly continuous light-green carpet over the forest floor. Vanilla-leaf leaves were used by the Saanich of Vancouver Island and probably by other groups in the plant's range, as an insect repellent (they emit a vanilla-like fragrance when dry). The Saanich people dried the leaves and hung them in bunches in houses to keep flies and mosquitos away.<sup>3</sup>



While you are in the Vanilla-Leaf Meadow, keep an eye out for **Anne Landry's** favourite trees, the magnificent bigleaf maples. A fun fact ... while the sap of bigleaf maples can be used to make a passable maple syrup, this was not done originally by Indigenous peoples. It takes several times more bigleaf maple sap than eastern-sugar maple sap to make a given quantity of syrup.<sup>4</sup>

Continuing on the trail, bear right at the junction, toward Fin Road (instead of King Road). At the trail closed sign, follow the new trail to the right to the intersection with the Fin road trail where you will go left and retrace your steps back to the starting point.

1) More information on Ms. Thomas' inspiration for Haven Woods can be read at [haven.ca/post/haven-woods/](https://haven.ca/post/haven-woods/)

2) More information on trail licences can be found at [galtt.ca/our-trail-work/#traillicences](https://galtt.ca/our-trail-work/#traillicences)

3, 4) Pojar & Mackinnon, *Plants of Coastal British Columbia*



Three of the Haven Woods fairy doors—plus a bonus birdhouse.