

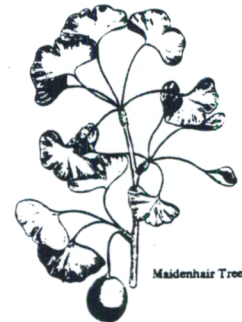
P.S. It was March 31st and they have been back every day though usually fewer at a time. If I was only good with a video camera.

P.P.S. Earlier that day, March 26th, I was serenaded by a northern shrike, another first and on March 4th, I witnessed a goshawk taking a squirrel 20' outside the window. I've had more than my share of birding thrills this winter.

#### GUIDED WALKS:

by Katherine Clough

Friends of the Farm invite to you join them on a guided walking tour of the Experimental Farm property in Charlottetown this summer. We will walk through the Royal Grove, visit the Lily Pond, view the site of a 19th century pottery and find the mysterious Ginkgo tree. As many of you already know the future of the site is uncertain. Friends of the Farm believes that it could be developed into a significant resource for public education and recreation. Let us share with you our vision for a permanent cultural and ecological landscape which will delight and serve the needs of citizens and visitors in the 21st century.



Walks will be held on the second Wednesday of the month, June to September, that is June 12, July 10, August 14, and September 11. Meet in front of Ravenwood at 7 PM. Duration 1 hour. No charge.

For more information call Friends of the Farm at the Island Nature Trust office, 892-7513.

#### THE WILDLIFE CORNER:

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Questions about the values of different plants to animals and the needs of certain groups of animals always seem to be hot topics for workshops. This new feature will focus on providing some basic information on certain plants and animals.

#### Balsam fir, Var (*Abies balsamea*)

This native species grows up to 25 meters in height on the Island. In woodlands conditions, its total branch width tends to be less than 8 metres. This a relatively hardy tree though somewhat susceptible to frost. It is coded with a hardiness scale of 2 and it grows on a wide variety of soils.

#### Wildlife Benefits:

Balsam fir provides both food and cover. It is the preferred larval plant for spruce budworm caterpillars and some other moths. Its seed is produced in vertical cones that decompose when they mature. The seed is eaten by a variety of birds, squirrels, and other small mammals. In provinces outside the Island, this species is browsed by moose and other hoofed animals while on the Island its primary mammalian browser is the snowshoe hare. This species is prone to top damage and stem rot. Thus, older stands or individual fir trees tend to have many cavities.

#### Seasonal Considerations:

This species provides cover year-round while its cones provide seed from mid-August to September. In mid-autumn, the cone scales and seeds fall off the upright centre core of the cone. The tree serves as foraging habitat for foliage gleaners (chickadees, Evening Grosbeaks) and bark gleaners (chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, creepers).