

SUMMER 2026

# FROM THE PARK BENCH

Summer brought sunshine, green spaces, and plenty of reasons to get outside and connect with nature. Across Charlottetown, plants grew, trees took root, and people came together to care for the places we love.

In this edition of From the Park Bench, we're looking back at a season of tree planting, restoration, creativity, and community. Discover the people and projects behind our greener spaces, find planting inspiration, explore nature education in Victoria Park, and revisit some of the summer's memorable events.

As summer fades into autumn, we look back on a season of growth, connection, and shared moments.

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CHARLOTTETOWN

# Sustainability in the City

## Urban Forestry: A Strong Spring of Planting and Restoration

This spring, the City continued its post-Fiona tree planting and restoration efforts, with almost 4,000 trees, shrubs and other plants added in Charlottetown. Work took place at Victoria Park, Upton Park, J. Frank McAulay Park, Windsor Park, Hermitage Creek, River Ridge Park, Ellen's Creek and Wrights Creek, as well as through street and park tree planting. The work has been supported by Trees for Life, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Growing Canada's Community Canopies program, Green Communities Canada and community partners.

## Restoring Victoria Park's Forest

Victoria Park has been one of the major focuses of this year's restoration work. The need for restoration is the result of several overlapping pressures that have changed the forest dramatically in recent years.

Hurricane Fiona removed a significant portion of the park's tree canopy, opening large areas of forest floor to sunlight and changing growing conditions. Since then, the park has also experienced continued decline of American beech associated with beech leaf mining weevil, while spruce and larch bark beetles have killed a significant number of trees in the southern portion of the forest. As trees have been lost, invasive species such as glossy buckthorn and Norway maple have taken advantage of the newly opened space, making it increasingly difficult for native forest regeneration to occur naturally. Continued on next page...



# Sustainability in the City

Rather than simply replacing individual trees, the City is working to restore a diverse forest ecosystem. More than 800 trees, shrubs and other plants representing over 71 species have been planted throughout Victoria Park this year, including 250 trees and shrubs planted as part of the larger restoration effort during the City's annual Arbor event. Six Grade 5 and 6 classes participated in the event, helping plant the new forest while learning about restoration and the importance of urban forests. Additionally, students from Colonel Gray and UPEI participated in their own planting events throughout the park.

The restoration is focused on rebuilding a diverse Wabanaki-Acadian and Eastern Deciduous forest using species selected to withstand both current and projected future climate conditions. This diversity is important because forests dominated by a small number of species are more vulnerable to pests, diseases and other disturbances. The goal is to create a healthier, more resilient forest that can continue to provide shade, habitat, recreation and other benefits for generations to come.



**Upton Park**



## Restoring Other Parks and Natural Areas

At J. Frank McAulay Park, more than 200 trees, shrubs and other plants have been added in naturalized modules along the wet edge of the park's swale. Flood-tolerant species and raised planting areas are being used to create new habitat while helping stabilize the shoreline, improve infiltration and support flood management. Restoration of areas previously dominated by Japanese knotweed, including a new rock garden, is also underway.

At Upton Park, 200 trees and shrubs were planted this year following the loss of the park's mature trees due to spruce bark beetle, after the majority of its canopy was lost during Fiona. The long-term goal is to replace the former single-species-dominated forest with a diverse and climate-resilient natural area.



**Ellen's Creek Natural Area**

# Sustainability in the City

## Restoring Other Parks and Natural Areas



At River Ridge Park, the City, with support from Green Communities Canada, has begun creating small naturalized planting modules. Over time, these plantings will form natural pathways and areas of forest and ecological interest, transforming areas of the park that previously consisted largely of open grass.

Across Windsor Park, Ellen's Creek, Hermitage Creek and Wrights Creek, the FCM Growing Canada's Community Canopies project supported the planting of 770 trees, 111 shrubs and 235 other plants this year representing 85 different species. The project supported invasive species removal and riparian restoration at Wrights Creek.

These projects are restoring the City's canopy and rebuilding diverse, resilient urban forests and natural areas across Charlottetown.



# Sustainability in the City



Seasonal staff in front of newly planted restoration area in Victoria Park
(From left to right: Charlotte Palmer, Alistair Lucas, Rachel Richard, and Maggie Chauvin).





**Wood-burning art piece by Maggie Chauvin.**

# Our Environment

## Rooted in Art

In 2026, Rooted in Art was reimagined as a live nature-inspired art competition.

Eight PEI-based artists were given three hours to complete art pieces based on the iconic Charlottetown landscape of Victoria Park. The public was invited to watch the artist's creations come to life through a variety of mediums, all with the shared goal of celebrating urban trees.

From the aesthetic beauty to the essential services trees provide – such as air purification, flood and stormwater management, wind and noise buffering, this initiative seeks to deepen the community's connection with nature and highlight the importance of the urban forest.

## MEET THE ARTISTS



# Our Environment

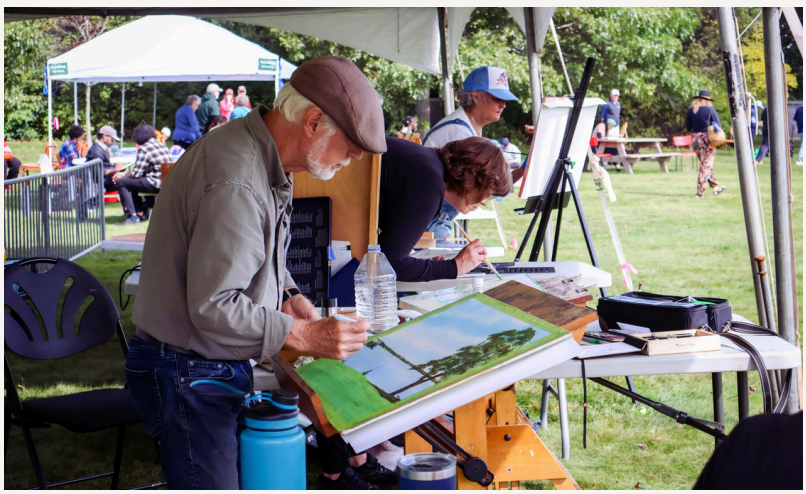
## Rooted in Art, Reimagined

### New live format brought artists and community members together to celebrate

The reimagined event, held Saturday, Sept. 12, invited the public to watch the creative process unfold. The public could also take part in the new Anything Grows category and paint or draw alongside the competing artists.

All eight P.E.I.-based artists painted the same landscape, featuring a notable grouping of linden trees in Victoria Park. Working from the same view, each artist brought their own style and interpretation to the scene during the live event.

The works were reviewed and winners selected by a panel with experience in municipal leadership, environmental sustainability and the arts.









# Our Environment

**The 2026 Rooted in Art winners were:**

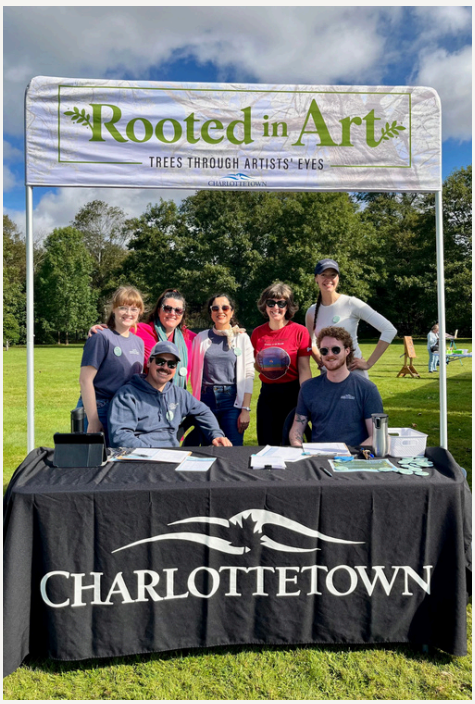
- First place: Kim Jabbour - $1,500
- Second place: Cynthia Gunsinger - $1,000
- Third place: Christina Patterson - $750

The remaining participating artists received a $500 honourarium.

"This year's new live competition brought a fresh energy to Rooted in Art," said Councillor Trevor MacKinnon, Chair of the City's Environment and Sustainability Committee. "It was wonderful to see artists and community members drawing inspiration from the same landscape while celebrating the important role trees play in our city."







# Our Environment

The new Anything Grows category gave residents of all ages and skill levels an opportunity to create their own artwork inspired by the same Victoria Park landscape. A total of 26 people participated in Anything Grows. Categories were created for adults and children. One winner in each of those categories received a $100 Blank Canvas Art Supplies gift card.

The City thanks Confederation Centre of the Arts and Blank Canvas Art Supplies for their support of this year's event and helping to provide materials and equipment for the new live competition format.

For more information about Rooted in Art, or to view past artwork and installations, visit Charlottetown.ca/Roots.



**Photo 1 – Mayor Philip Brown presents first-place winner Kim Jabbour with her award for the 2026 Rooted in Art competition.**



**Photo 2 – From left, third-place winner Christina Patterson, first-place winner Kim Jabbour, and second-place winner Cynthia Gunsinger stand in front of the trees at Victoria Park that inspired their works during the 2026 Rooted in Art live competition.**

# Spotlight on Nature

## Staff Pick for Planting!



**Plant Pick:** Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.)
**Team Member:** Rachel Richard
**Position:** Restoration Field Lead

PEI has at least six different native species of Serviceberry, with many different common names used for them, including Juneberry, Saskatoon Berry, Shadbush, etc.
Serviceberry is well known for its beautiful white flowers in May and its edible purple berries throughout July and August. Depending on the species, they can be a small single-stemmed understory tree or a large multi-stemmed shrub, making them a great option for forest restoration or landscape gardening.

**Fun Facts:**

- Serviceberry has some of the hardest wood on PEI, just behind Ironwood!
- Humans can eat the berries fresh off the plant or use them in delicious baked goods.
- Dozens of wildlife species use this species, including waxwings, squirrels, and native pollinators!



# Spotlight on Nature

## Nature Education in Victoria Park

The Victoria Park Nature Education team had a busy and fulfilling season! From May to the beginning of September, the team worked primarily in Victoria Park, supporting ecological restoration through planting a diverse range of species and removing invasive species from the park, while also facilitating a range of nature tours and activities for children's groups and the public. This year, the focus was on planting shrubs and herbaceous species, such as native flowers, to build more diverse plant communities within the restoration sites and forested areas. Species added included swamp milkweed, yellow violet, ferns, hawthorns, and blueberry bushes.



Over 700 participants enjoyed nature tours and hands-on activities facilitated by the team this year. Many of the programs focused on Deadman's Pond, highlighting the qualities that make this a special habitat in the park, what animals call this space home, and how we can help take care of the area. Elementary school classes, daycares, and day camps had the opportunity to see frog tadpoles and salamander larvae, explore the forest with magnifying glasses and binoculars, and conduct water quality testing. Other highlights include sharing ecosystem management practices with the Colonel Gray High School Envirothon team, hosting the UPEI Explore Program groups for tree planting and invasive species removal in the park, and leading a sensory tree tour in the arboretum for the Visually Impaired Walking Group. Speaking of the arboretum, the self-guided arboretum tree tour received an update this year! The self-guided tour can be found at Victoria Park Arboretum Map - City of Charlottetown Continued on next page...

# Spotlight on Nature

## Nature Education in Victoria Park

A major highlight of the season was the creation of the Charlottetown Summer BioBlitz, in partnership with Nature PEI. The purpose of a bioblitz is to find as many species as possible growing in an area during a set period of time. Observers upload photos or audio files of wild plants, insects, fungi, and animals to iNaturalist, the free community science app and global database that the public, researchers, and organizations can use to learn more about biodiversity and help inform decision-making. From July 15 to August 15, about 120 people submitted more than 2,100 observations of over 600 species in Charlottetown. There were five in-person nature walks throughout the month, each hosted at a different greenspace in Charlottetown and with different guest experts and organizations co-hosting the walks. It was great to see the community's enthusiasm, and to help people pay closer attention to the natural world right outside their door. iNaturalist can be used anytime, anywhere, and we hope folks will enjoy using it to learn more about nature throughout the year!

The Nature Education team's programming will start up again in May 2027; check out Victoria Park Nature Education - City of Charlottetown next spring for details on the events and activities available in 2027.







# Events

## Fix-It Fair | October 24, 2026

The Fix-It Fair is returning to Charlottetown this October!

Renew the life of your broken household items. Talented, volunteer Fixers will lend their expertise to assist in free repairs, and show you how you can do it yourself!

Everyone is encouraged to bring in one item, such as a small appliance, item of clothing, or even a bike to be repaired by a Fixer, free of charge.

## Call for volunteers

Have a knack for fixing things? Want to make a difference in your community? Sign up to be a volunteer Fixer at the Fix-It Fair!

Fixers help to repair all kinds of broken items. Whether you're a DIY enthusiast or just handy with tools, we need your help to keep items out of the landfill and in working order.

Visit Charlottetown.ca/FixItFair to sign up!







**Date: October 24, 2026**

**Time: 10:00 AM - 02:00 PM**

**Location: Simmons Sports Centre, 170 North River Road**