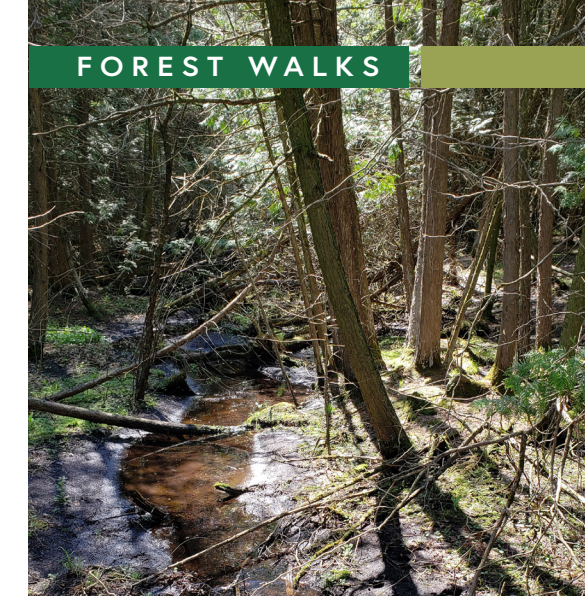


Our partnership continues with the Greenbelt Foundation. In Part II, we explore a cut flower and garlic producer that conducts business on the Oak Ridges Moraine slope where the soils are more fertile with less sand. Then we take a hike in the far north of Whitchurch-Stouffville on the sandy loam of Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core area. Finally, back down on the Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside, we visit a long-standing urban forester who is mentoring the next generation. (1)



Possibility grows here.



DAVIS DRIVE TRACT

by David Tuley

The Davis Drive Tract of the York Regional Forest is a smaller forest tract on the Greenbelt in Whitchurch-Stouffville. However, it is no less important. This parcel of land provides a habitat link between the larger North Tract and Bendor & Graves Tract forests.

A railway track divides the property. The northern half is accessible by a parking area on Davis Drive, while the southern half has a parking area on McCowan. It is illegal to trespass on railroad property.

Both tracts feature new reforestation activity, especially the northern half, which creates areas of limited canopy.

On this bright and warm Sunday in May, we

hiked portions of the southern half. We chose this tract because it is less popular than the larger neighbouring North Tract forest. There were seven cars in the parking lot - not bad for a weekend. Most hikers tended to be around the larger pond - taking photos, reading under a tree or circling the pond.

There is an open area nearby the parking area, which formerly was the site of a house and outbuildings.

There are three more ponds on the property, but these are in various states of succession - more cattail than open water. The stream that crosses the property flows to Lake Simcoe and is an important spawning area for

Brook Trout.

The trails are a mix of grass and dirt, and are mostly level, with exception to a few rises. The level of difficulty, as the two baby strollers we saw were having no trouble.

This is a nice forest for a family outing that includes young or older members. For more advanced hikers, it would be easy to combine the Davis Tract with a portion of the North Tract forest.

It would be difficult to get permanently lost in this forest, but it can be disorienting. It is recommended that one carry a fully charged cell phone that has a trail app on it to track your progress. (1)

PERENNIAL PETALS

by David Tuley

Cathy Bartolic is an inspiring entrepreneur and the owner of a small boutique flower farm between Bruce's Mill and Hammett's Holm (aka. a few kilometers west of Stouffville).

Perennial Petals is a seasonal, boutique flower farm and floral studio offering unique, heritage and contemporary blooms for flower lovers in Town and in York Region. Their flowers are grown to perfection and picked at the height of their glory. It is a working farm and not open to the public except for special occasions and scheduled workshops.

Cathy recently retired from a 16-year long time gig as the Executive Director at Ontario Farm Fresh. She is now full time, as of May 1, 2021, dedicated to the business of Perennial Petals. This isn't a new endeavor, as Cathy has a long history dating back to childhood of working in nursery and

greenhouse production. The concept for a cut flower farm was launched about 25 years ago. "Dried flowers were pretty hot back then," recalls Cathy, "and they are now making a big come back."

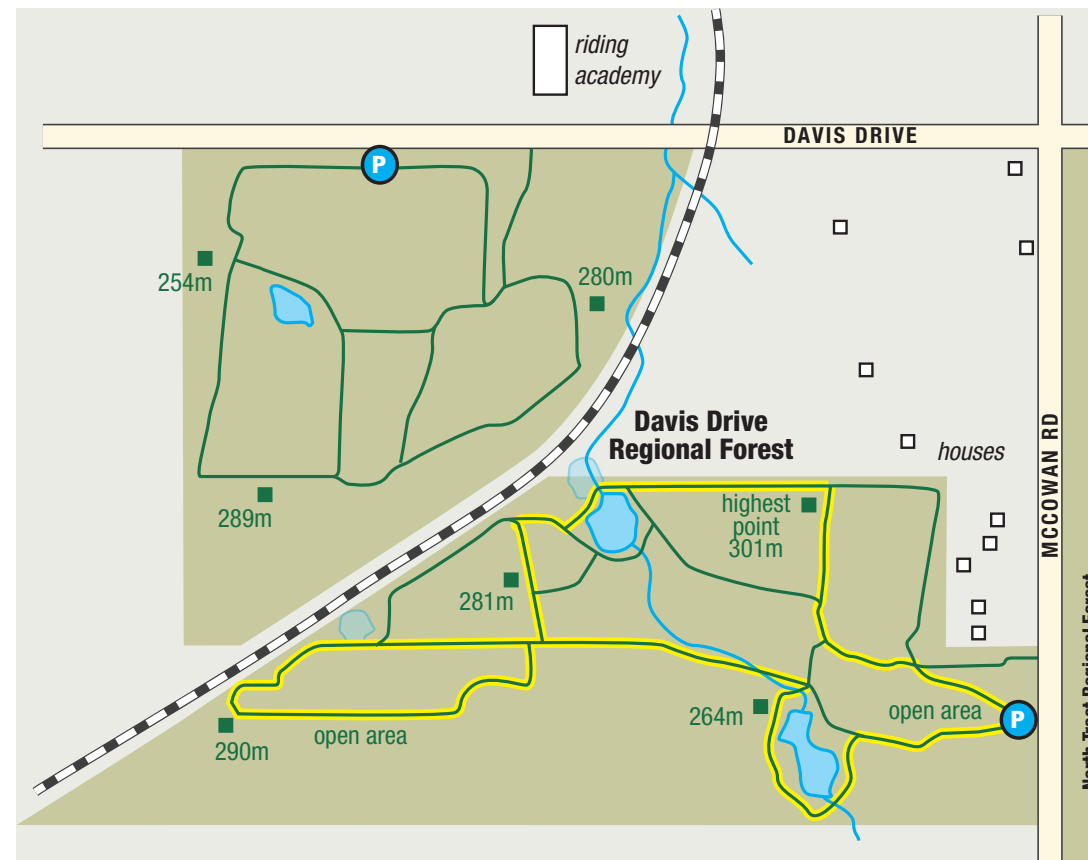
Cathy's family moved out to the countryside in the late 1960's and built a house. Unfortunately, soon after, the house was expropriated and demolished for the proposed Pickering Airport. The family purchased the current 22-acre property along Stouffville Rd. in 1972. "We didn't live on the 'new' farm, but we started planting our flowers long ago," said Cathy. "We came back to live here in 2018 to support my mom."

Perennial Petals has a number of focus points: Subscription Cut Flowers, Workshops, Seasonal Container Baskets, and Garlic Production. "We sell a lot of seasonal items at the Newmarket Farmers Market," said Cathy. The Perennial Petals'

website features a number of cut flower subscriptions, from Peonies to Spring and Summer Flings. "Our bouquet subscription-delivery service is doing very well - these flowers bring such incredible joy to people," exclaims Cathy. She says that many orders have come from out-of-town - people are seeking to brighten the daily lives of family members that they are not allowed to visit.

My husband Gary got dragged into this business because of his brawn, but he now admits that he gets "Great satisfaction from growing garlic and flowers," adds Cathy. "We are planning to step up our workshops as soon as we are allowed. This will be a popular endeavor."

for more - perennialpetals.com



for more trails - L4A.ca

Trail: Davis Drive Tract South
 Time: 45 minutes
 Distance: 2.8 km
 Difficulty: Easy
 Starting Elevation: 261m
 Elevation Gain: 82m
 Forest: Mixed
 Highlight: The Large Pond
 Traffic: Moderate this day