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encompasses. These lands play significant roles as an urban ecological reserve and vital greenbelt corridor, linking the Fraser River to Burrard Inlet on the coast.

Two groups—the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society and the Burke Mountain Naturalists—are working together to have these lands preserved. Presently, the groups are lobbying the provincial

and municipal governments and raising public awareness through local newspapers and special events such as tours of the grounds (from March to October) and the annual TreeFest celebration in September. To learn more or to make a donation, contact either of these groups at their respective websites: www.rhcs.org and www.bmn.bc.ca.

Atlantic

BY CAROL MATTHEWS
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LORD OF THE TREE RINGS

In 2005, along the coastline of the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick,

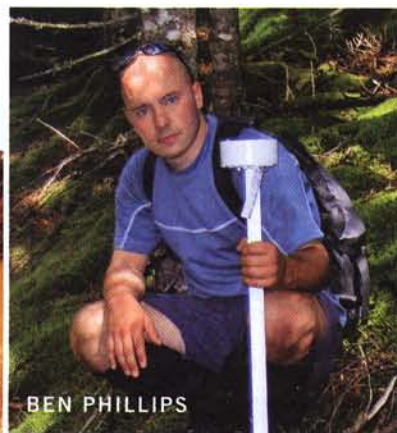
Ben Phillips made a spectacular discovery: a 445-year-old red spruce tree deemed to be the oldest of its kind in the world.

Ben, who is now in his fourth year of a double major in environmental studies and geography at

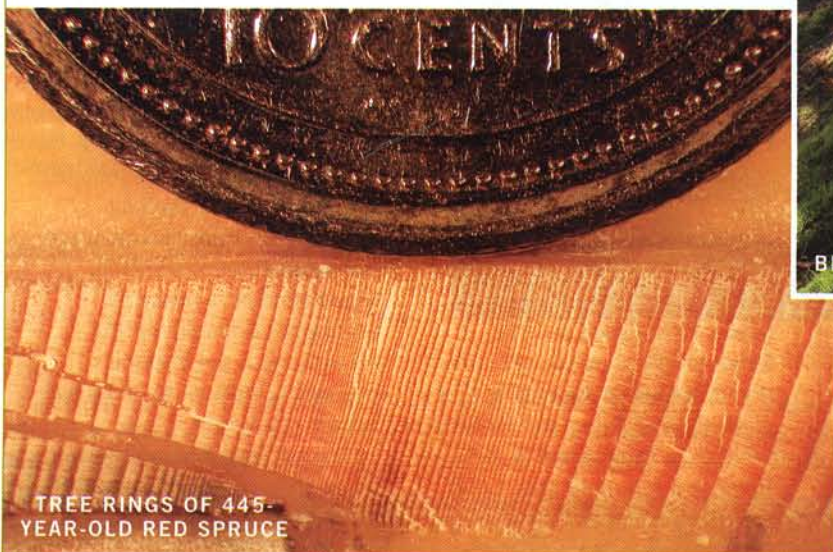
Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., was conducting a survey (for his environmental studies class) of red spruces, comparing those growing near the shore with those at higher elevations. Ben knew he had found something special when he came across a grove of trees covered in a greenish white lichen, most likely *Cliostomum leprosum*, that only grows on ancient trees.

To determine the tree's age without harming it, Ben used an increment boring tool to remove a small (about the size of a pencil) cross-section of the trunk. Once the core sample was mounted, sanded and polished, he was astounded to learn the tree was more than four centuries old.

The data provided by Ben's find is significant. "This particular tree more than doubles our previous tree-ring records for the Maritimes. When we combine



the climate information contained in this tree's rings with those of other old trees growing in the area, we can get a very good idea of how the climate has been changing over that 445-year time period," he explains.



TREE RINGS OF 445-YEAR-OLD RED SPRUCE

But for Ben personally, the ancient tree actually speaks more to the future than the past. "It's very inspiring and empowering to find a tree that is 445 years old," he says. "Exploring nature and witnessing its resiliency first-hand really makes me believe humans can change our path and go on to lead sustainable lives in the future."

Quebec

BY LARRY HODGSON
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BLOOM TOWN

Do you know what your town's floral emblem is? Or whether it even has one?

More importantly, how does a town even choose a botanical symbol?

"Usually the idea comes from the town's garden club," says Thérèse Tourigny, general manager of the volunteer organization Federation of Societies of Horticulture and



Ecology of Quebec. "Often they'll set up a committee to choose a flower, then have it ratified by the town council. Or they may hold a public consultation on the subject, letting citizens pick their favourite from among two or three suggestions."

Unfortunately, no one had begun to keep a record of when or



BUNCHBERRY

why towns have chosen certain emblems until the FSHEQ established a program to compile the data a few years ago. As of January, 179 municipalities and 66 garden clubs and beautification committees have listed their floral emblems on the federation's website (see page 118), which has been serving as an unofficial registry. About 15 new emblems have been added yearly since 2003.

The province's most popular floral logo is the daylily (*Hemerocallis*). Of the 20 municipalities that chose the flower, six even specified a particular cultivar: 'Stella de Oro'. Other popular selections are roses (11 municipalities), purple coneflowers (10) and daisies (8).

While I was surprised to learn that there was not yet a movement toward choosing native flowers, a few towns did select indigenous flowers, including stiff aster (*Aster linariifolius*) and bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*). According to Tourigny, it's a rather recent trend.

"Traditionally, most towns have gone for either plants of historical

petalpushers



This summer, Quebec begins a new government- and industry-sponsored program to recognize the beautification of its municipalities: Les Fleurons du Québec. Each participating town will be rated according to its horticultural and environmental efforts and be awarded zero to five flowers (much like restaurants and hotels receive one to five stars). Ratings may be displayed for three years, at which time the town will be rejudged. Find out more at www.fleuronsquebec.com.