

TREES 'N' TRAITS: OAK – “ENDURANCE”

Neil Baldwin

Anyone spending substantial time amongst trees knows they can affect body, mind and spirit. This series encourages you to examine whether particular species can make a difference to you and the degree to which you may embody some of their traits, or those traits you might at times desire. Several varieties of Oak may be found in Grey-Bruce: Red, White, Pin, and Bur. They all tend to be generally slow-growing and long-lived trees. Over the years, Oaks develop widely-spreading branches that appear to be going in all directions. Especially growing in open areas, branches can keep going and going, expanding far beyond the tree's centre, such that a mature Oak might have a spread up to one and a half times its height.

Oak's long life span is also reflected in how it takes 20-50 years before it begins to produce acorns, which are themselves hard, tough little nuggets which can withstand a lot between dropping and germinating. Oaks have long oval leaves with distinct lobes that make them easy to identify – though the Bur Oak can be tricky because its leaves have great variance of shape from tree to tree and may even not have obvious lobes. Something else unique about Oak leaves is their tendency to grow twice in a season due to the variety of insects which seem to thrive on them. While Oaks do provide a good living

environment for insects, they are rarely bothered by those which bore into their bark, which may in part account for their long life.

Can you identify with some or all of Oak's enduring characteristics? Are you a “slow-and-steady wins the race” kind of person? Can you be tough and tightly closed like the acorn, steeling yourself against what the world throws your way? Do you have the ability, like the Oak's leaves, to regenerate yourself when necessary? If you are an Oak, you may also have a presence which is large yet looms quietly and calmly in the background. It may also be the case that you provide a nurturing and sheltering environment for others.

If you are like an Oak and need to bolster your energies, try spending time either under an Oak's expansive branches, or perhaps cultivate presence while positioning yourself in view of the tree's entire broad canopy. And even if you're not an Oak but value its characteristics, these may be great opportunities to cultivate them.

Less common on the Peninsula, Oaks are scattered throughout most of Grey-Bruce. Some particularly good examples are along the Harrison Park entrance road on the hillside, and also just south of there in the arboretum by Grey Sauble Conservation HQ off Inglis Falls Road. Next month: Maples. **ℳ**

WAR, ITS MEANING AND CONSEQUENCES

Judy Beth Armstrong

The new season begins September 10 for The Bluewater Association for Lifelong Learning when Dr. Stanislav Kirschbaum introduces his six-part series, War: Its Meaning and Consequences. He will explore the whats, whys and hows of war, especially its many consequences, and considers alternatives. Dr. Kirschbaum is professor and chairman of the Department of International Studies at York University's bilingual Glendon College, where he has taught for over four decades. His teaching, research and publications focus on Central Europe, especially Slovakia, and also deal with issues of

security, war and diplomacy.

All lectures in the 2015-2016 season are scheduled for Thursday mornings (unless otherwise noted), 10am to noon, in Owen Sound at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre. Additional courses include The Wonders of Renaissance Art; Let There Be Light; and Our Beautiful Baffling Brains. BALL membership is open to all adults who are interested in life-long learning. For further information and to register, please visit bluewaterlearns.com. Each 6-part lecture series costs \$45, including BALL membership fee. **ℳ**



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A black and white portrait of Sandra J. Howe, a woman with glasses and a warm smile.