

322 words, column #41  
Java Talk  
(for February 7 to February 13, 2008)

## Every Age Is The Best Age

### *Scattered Seeds*

“It doesn’t matter how much work you are doing,” said my mentor, many years ago. “If it isn’t effective, it doesn’t count.” Now that I have my gardening hat out, I have been thinking about how my yard has gone through many stages over the decades, just as I have. Of course, until the time is right, many seeds lie dormant, including ones sown by writers and storytellers.

This week, I have been looking at a very detailed gardening book I created during the 1980’s. In those days, I had different ambitions, as well as many different types of gardens growing in my yard. It didn’t occur to me that those labour-intensive plants and a lawn were destroying a Garry oak woodland, rock outcrop, meadow, and ecosystem which, years later, I would be trying to restore.

However, by the time I finished many busy years attending full-time, year-round classes at the University of Victoria, the long-neglected gardens had grown over; the poor lawn, mowed too short and never watered, was nearly dead; and at the back, where there had been a forest, there were, now, disseminated at the bottom of a cliff, rows and rows of big houses with small plots.

Anyway, last week, I received a copy of *The Garry Oak Gardener's Handbook: Nurturing Native Plant Habitat in Garry Oak Communities*, from GOERT (Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team) [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca). The recently published handbook contents include chapters on “What are Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems?”; “Benefits To Becoming a Garry Oak Gardener”; richly detailed chapters on the “Six Steps to a Garry Oak Garden”; how to “Protect the Future of Garry Oak Habitat”; and an “Appendix” with lists of “Suppliers of Native Plants and Seeds”; “Suggested Parks and Gardens for Viewing Native Plants”; and additional “Educational Resources”.

"Garry oak habitat can take decades to develop and mature," says GOERT. I think this is also true for deep-rooted writers and would-be self-sufficient gardeners.

Deidre Hill