

TREES 'N' TRAITS: ASPENS – “ENTHUSIASM”

Neil Baldwin

When you are around other people, does their presence affect you in some way? What about being in the company of animals? Trees? They are all living things, with life force moving within and amongst their cells. This nine-part series of articles dares you to ponder the influence of trees in your immediate vicinity, particularly those with traits you embody, as well as those you might desire.

Last month looked at the transformative Larches. This month explores the Aspens found in Grey-Bruce. Both Trembling Aspen and the less common Large-Toothed Aspen are easy to spot because their long, flat leaf stalks catch even the slightest breeze to set the leaves aquiver. Mature trees have compact, rounded crowns and smooth bark, and are usually bare of branches on the lower half of their trunk due to self-pruning.

A “pioneer” species, Aspens often get their start in places that have been disturbed by fire or logging; they grow in pure stands. Although a single Aspen can produce 1.6 million seeds, they more often reproduce by sending up suckers from their shallow but extensive root system with the result being many clones. In time, however, a variety of other species will take hold in the relative

brightness of the Aspen understory and will eventually predominate. For this reason Aspen are termed a “nurse crop.”

Are you someone who is easily excited and has difficulty hiding enthusiasm? Perhaps you wouldn't want to hide it even if you could? Do you like to surround yourself with others of like mind and spirit? But you also find that a variety of other personalities are drawn to your presence and cultivate growth and development within it? If this sounds familiar, perhaps you are an Aspen type. And just as Aspens drop branches that no longer contribute much to their growth and well-being, perhaps you have an intuitive ability to shed what drains your energy so you can get more from what does sustain it.

If you are an Aspen type and need a lift (or maybe you are not but craving some of their infectious and carefree enthusiasm) go find a lovely spot to hang out in the presence of Aspen and see what it does for you. My favourite places to have Aspen at my back are along the shores with scenic Bruce Trail vistas above them, from Devil's Monument south of Dyers Bay all the way out to Cabot Head. I always come back energized. Next month: Birches. ♪

Summer CONCERT SERIES expands to Meaford Hall



Susan Lake

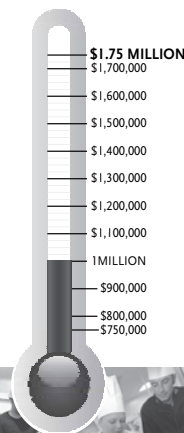
An exciting series of seven concerts comes to Meaford Hall this summer through an expansion of the Midland-based Brookside Music Association's Festival of the Bay. “We are excited to be working with Meaford Hall to expand our summer festival in order to bring outstanding musical presentations to another state-of-the-art venue,” says John French, Founder and Artistic Director of Brookside Music Association.

The series features world class performers beginning with the *Toronto All Star Big Band* on July 4; *Adam Crossley* on July 11; *Mauro Bertoli & Wolfgang David* on July 17; ‘Wendake/Hurononia’ featuring the *Toronto Consort* on August 1; *Africville Stories* featuring *Jackie Richardson* and *Joe Sealy* on August 8; *Susan Aglukark* on August 14; the *Sultans of String* on August 29; and *Stories and Songs of Stompin' Tom* featuring *Whiskey Jack* on September 12. Prices vary – become a Brookside Loyalty Member to receive \$5 off per ticket throughout the series.

Brookside Music Association is a not-for-profit organization with a mandate of promoting the love of music. Now in its fifth year, the organization is run by a volunteer Board of Directors and is proudly supported by The Ontario Arts Council, The Ontario Media Development Corporation and Heritage Canada. For more information about these events please visit www.meafordhall.ca or www.brooksidemusic.com. ♪

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