

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Ceremonial cherry tree planting at Bowen Park

*Park beautification partnership with the Seven Potatoes Society*

#### Summary

A ceremonial tree planting took place today, Tuesday, February 15. Twelve 'Akebono' flowering Cherry Trees were planted in Bowen Park near the lower picnic shelter. The planting was attended by representatives from the Seven Potatoes Society and the City of Nanaimo, including the Mayor and members of Council.

Seven Potatoes Society, or Central Vancouver Island Japanese-Canadian Cultural Society, raised enough funds to purchase sixteen 'Akebono' flowering Cherry Trees to be planted this year. Twelve have been planted at Bowen Park and four will be planted at Rock Ridge Park. This initiative was spearheaded by the group's Vice President Keiko Limshue who hopes to continue fundraising and plant one hundred more cherry trees next year. The trees will be entered into the City of Nanaimo's formal tree inventory and cared for by the City Parks Department.

The tree planting marks the 25th anniversary of Nanaimo and Saitama becoming friendship cities in 1996. The Cherry Blossom Project has been endorsed by Saitama City's Mayor, Hayato Shimizu.

**Strategic Link:** The project will serve to beautify a section of the park and provide environmental benefits including: carbon sequestration, habitat, storm water attenuation, production of oxygen and cleaning airborne pollutants, supporting an environmentally responsible local government.

#### Key Points

- Seven Potatoes Society gathered donations and purchased 16 'Akebono' flowering Cherry Trees to be planted this year in Nanaimo's parks. They are still accepting donations and hope to plant 100 more cherry trees in Nanaimo next year.
- Nanaimo and Saitama became friendship cities in 1996. Planting these trees marks the 25th anniversary of this relationship.

#### Quotes

"On behalf of the City of Nanaimo and Council I'd like to thank the Seven Potatoes Society for contributing to our urban environment and for celebrating and growing the Friendship City relationship with Saitama, Japan. Nanaimo has a healthy urban environment that creates sustainable green spaces and a vibrant tree canopy, which strengthens our environment, economy and health."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

#### Quick Facts

- Tree planting is a very powerful tool to combat the impacts of climate change and improve air quality.
- The health and well being of Nanaimo's urban forest greatly depends on and benefits from the participation, care and efforts of all individuals and community groups.
- In Saitama City there is a 20 km long corridor of cherry blossoms. The Mayor invites Nanaimo to visit one day.

Continued... Ceremonial cherry tree planting at Bowen Park

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