


# Cowichan Lake Research Station

*The old-growth trail ends at an old road. Turn right and continue until you reach Forestry Road at the Research Station gate. Walk back up the road until you are across from the starting point. Enter the walk-in gate on the left side of the road. Follow the path around to the left and walk the loop trail through the arboretum, ending up where you began.*

## Stop 4: BC's best

A plantation containing many different tree species for study and conservation is called an arboretum. This arboretum contains a selection of many trees native to BC's forests. How many can you identify?

- Douglas-fir \_\_\_\_\_
  - Western hemlock \_\_\_\_\_
  - Pacific silver fir \_\_\_\_\_
  - Grand fir \_\_\_\_\_
  - Western white pine \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ponderosa pine \_\_\_\_\_
  - Lodgepole pine \_\_\_\_\_
  - Western redcedar \_\_\_\_\_
  - Yellow-cedar \_\_\_\_\_
- 

*We hope you enjoyed your visit.*

*For more information on forestry research in BC, please visit our web pages.*

## Climate

The Cowichan Lake Research Station has a mild coastal climate. It is substantially wetter than the east coast of Vancouver Island around Duncan, but drier and warmer in the summer than the west coast near Tofino. It is in the Coastal Western Hemlock zone, which means that, over the long term, forests tend to naturally develop into hemlock-dominated stands. This reflects the moist climate of the temperate rainforest where fires are uncommon and most disturbance is caused by windstorms or disease that affect small patches or single trees.

## Forest

The forest at the station is a mixture of broadleaf and conifer trees. The most common is Douglas-fir. Others include red alder, bigleaf maple, western hemlock, grand fir, and western redcedar. The forest was harvested in 1899 using a clearcut, and burnt after. A dense mixture of red alder and Douglas-fir sprang up, and the forest development has been studied in research trials ever since.

## Wildlife

Many animal species live here: blacktail deer, black bear, cougar, Pacific tree frogs, several species of woodpeckers, at least two types of salamanders, newts, squirrels, and banana slugs - and there are plenty of species below ground: worms, beetles, mites, and centipedes, to name a few.



## Tour 3:

## Forest area

***Check at the office what time the gate will be closed if you plan to stay after 3:30.***

**Please refrain from smoking in the forest.**

**Be aware that bears, cougars, and other wildlife may be present in the area.**

**Trails may be slippery or have fallen trees. Hike with care.**

## History

The Cowichan Lake Research Station was established in 1929 by the Canadian Forest Service. It was also a fisheries station and a forestry camp for unemployed men during the Depression. Since the 1930s it has been operated by the BC Forest Service. It is a valuable resource for scientists who study aspects of forest ecology, biology, productivity, management, and adaptation. The research station is a hub of research trials, archives of trees selected from forests around the province, and seed production for coastal species, including Douglas-fir, western redcedar, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western white pine, yellow-cedar, true firs, red alder, bigleaf maple, and black cottonwood.



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## Tour 3: Forest area



From here you can take several walking or hiking trails. To continue this tour, backtrack along the road until you see the interpretive sign, about 100 m in from Forestry Road. Turn left and follow the forest path about 1 km, or 15–20 minutes. Take your time and enjoy the diverse plants and forest sounds.

### Stop 3: It's soooo huge!

A small grove of old-growth Douglas-fir is nestled in the second-growth forest along this trail. When the original forest was logged in 1899, these trees were left standing. Even then they were probably large trees, but now they are true giants. Today these trees are remarkable for their size, but in the last century, forests were full of giant trees such as these.



### Stop 1: Step this way

Tour starts and ends at the sign to the Schenstrom Plots, about 5-minute walk from the front gate. Go around the gate and follow the old road about 600 m for 10–15 minutes until you come to the Schenstrom Plots poster on your right.

### Stop 2: Schenstrom Plots: the study that keeps on going...and going...

Established in 1929, these are some of the oldest continuous research trials in BC and Canada. These trials have been used to study forest growth and development, how ecosystems recover from disturbance, forest management effects, woody debris dynamics, and timber supply. These plots are still measured for studies today. Long-term studies provide a wide range of valuable information, allowing us to discover patterns over time.