PHOTO BY NIGEL LAING

#6398
Red Alder
Alnus rubra
Upper path
49 16′ 14″ N, -123 12′ 5″ W

BEAT A PATH – ALL THE TREES

PART OF THE ARTIST IN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM WITH THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WEST POINT GREY COMMUNITY CENTRE AND THE JERICHO STEWARDSHIP GROUP. THE LEGACY POSTER PROJECT AND EXHIBITION ARE SUPPORTED BY THE ROUNDHOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS & RECREATION CENTRE.

AN ARTIST PROJECT BY HOLLY SCHMIDT | BEATAPATH.CA/ALL-THE-TREES

EMAIL TO TREE #6398

Hello tree 6398,

Can you fly?

What do you eat?

— ANONYMOUS

RESPONSE FROM TREE #6398

Thank you for your questions! Sadly, I can't fly. The best way for me to get close to the sky is to patiently grow taller, reaching up higher and higher with my branches and leaves.

Through photosynthesis I can turn light energy from the sun into glucose. Alders like me tend to grow in disturbed areas and we're good neighbours to other plants because we are nitrogen fixers, meaning we put nitrogen back into the soil for use by other plants. We do this through small nodules on our roots that attract a type of bacteria. We feed the bacteria and they produce nitrogen for the soil. Over time, this will make the soil rich enough to attract a forest community of Douglas Firs and Western Hemlock. I like to think we are an uninvited guest that others learn to appreciate over time.

Hope you're enjoying the fall sunshine!

Holly Schmidt on behalf of Red Alder