

Park playground destroyed by school-book burning brothers

By Julie Slack

CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Two Milton brothers will be heading back to school a few weeks earlier than other local children — fire prevention school to be specific. The two youngsters, who were burning their school books and papers, accidentally torched the playground structure at Brookville Park on Sunday.

The 3:30 p.m. blaze could be seen throughout the small hamlet as a plume of black smoke hovered in the skies.

Milton Fire Department (MFD) Deputy Chief Dave Pratt said Halton police and fire crews attended the blaze, which completely destroyed the playground structure.

Pratt said that after the fire was extinguished police sifted through what they say were burned books and school notes and found names on the items.

Police then paid the youngsters a visit. Pratt said a MFD fire prevention officer will be spending time with them at the fire station where they will be taking part in the youth fire setter prevention program.

Pratt said he didn't have a damage estimate, but a similar playground structure fire at Me-



The playground at Brookville Park was destroyed by fire on Sunday afternoon. *Whonda Barclay / Special to the Champion*

morial Arena a few years ago cost the Town of Milton about \$10,000 to replace.

"The Town has a cost-recovery program, but I don't know whether the town will speak to that," he said. "Whether they choose to purse that or not, I don't know."

"To the boys' credit, they did go home and tell their parents what happened...they fessed up before the police arrived."

GARDENING IS FOR THE BIRDS

Why have birds in the garden? Creatures flitting around makes us feel safe. If they're flying, predators aren't likely in the area - one of those subconscious, primal things.

It's pretty easy to attract birds. The first rule? Have 30% cover so if predators DO come, birds will have somewhere to hide. If they feel safe, they'll visit. Good shelter plants include evergreens such as White Spruce and also make great nesting sites. Dense shrubs such as the lovely Grey-twig Dogwood are excellent and even offer late summer berries.

Shrubs with berries are obviously great for bird food. Pick a few so there are berries on and off all season. Great examples include Mountain Ash, Sparkleberry, Serviceberry and Red Jade Crabapple. Berries are



lovely in the landscape too, offering extra seasons of interest.

Another tip? Leave your garden standing through the winter so perennials offer seeds and shelter. It also looks better, holding the snow in a most beautiful way!

Encouraging birds is the best way to control pests! Some insects are ok. For example, shrub willows get leaf beetle which doesn't hurt it but attracts birds. Red Oak is also fantastic. Slugs, Japanese Beetles and more are cleaned up by birds. Want to know more? Call the experts - Fern Ridge Landscaping at 905-876-4852!



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