



Photo by Heidi Bohan



Photo by Heidi Bohan



Photo by Heidi Bohan

## The Mouse, Douglas Fir and the Great Forest Fire

*Adapted from a well known local legend, by Heidi Bohan*

A long time ago, when the animals and plants could speak to each other, there was a great forest fire burning through the forest. Little Mouse ran as fast as he could away from the hot fire but he knew he could not outrace the fast moving flames. He began to run from tree to tree asking them if they could save him.

First he ran to the bigleaf maple tree. "Help, help!" he cried. "Can you help me escape this fire?" Bigleaf maple tree replied, "No, I'm sorry little mouse, I am afraid that I will not be able to survive this forest fire". The mouse then ran to the red cedar tree. "Help, help! Can you help me escape the fire?" "No, I'm sorry little mouse, but I do not think that I can survive this great forest fire, either" said Red Cedar. Mouse ran from tree to tree asking the same question, and getting the same answer.

Finally he came to a great old Douglas fir tree, with its thick furrowed bark. "Help, help, Douglas fir! Can you help me escape this fire?" And Douglas fir replied, "Yes, I think that my thick bark will protect me from the heat of these flames. I may be able to survive this great fire. Climb to the top of my branches, and climb under the scales of my cone for extra protection." So, little mouse did as he was told, and climbed way up into Douglas fir tree and hid under the scales of the Douglas fir cones. Many other little mice followed him and did the same. And the Douglas fir tree was right, its thick bark protected them from the flames of the fire, and the fire passed them by.

To this day, if you look under the scales of the Douglas fir cone you can still see little mice hiding under the scales of the cones. Can you see them too?

