

# Good wood draws crowds

## Wood Expo

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James Dougan and son with their hill rods - Jan Degrass Photo

We on the Sunshine Coast love our wood. The Wood Expo, a one-day celebration of this natural resource, took place last Saturday and drew a constant flow of crowds to the Seaside Centre in Sechelt. It was organized by the Sunshine Coast Community Forest and the 22 exhibitors were all local folk who do the most interesting things with locally sourced wood.

For example, Charly Mithrush is an artist, not a woodworker, but she has been incorporating her art into garden benches, and she will use waste cuts of wood from construction sites to apply encaustic, paint or inked paper wrap to embellish them.

The Suncoast Woodcrafters Guild has also been creative. Tom Hourigan explained that the members of the guild had been challenged to create work from an eight-foot-long 2x4 of softwood, and he produced a toy cedar house and a fir wine rack. Other wooden items on display included a toy front loader and an intricate toy train running on wooden wheels.

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Outside the Seaside Centre, Rick Crook of Oyster Bay Boats set up his sliding seat rowboat. It looks a bit like a canoe until you get closer. It looks heavy too, but Crook assures me that it's not – he built it to be lifted on to a car top. Also outside the main hall James Dougan from Texada Island displayed his pint-sized “hill rods” – wooden racing cars of great craftsmanship complete with trunks that open and close, steering wheels and headlights.

Plumb Bob (Bob James) from Madeira Park is best known for his wood turning and he had many excellent examples on display in such woods as arbutus and dogwood crafted into artistic shapes that highlighted the fine grain and natural edge.

Will of the Woods (Will Cummer) has been working with LED lighting inside of hollowed out Douglas fir stumps, but his Dragon Lady maple and cedar coffee table drew the most attention. Roberta and Kaye Miller honoured the province's woods but they also work with exotics and manufactured wood.

Shy Watters has woven designs and patterns in cedar bark to make an array of clothing and other work often used in First Nations cultural ceremonies. Other artisans make use of driftwood and beach glass like Linda Buckingham's one-of-a-kind gift items or they use cottonwood bark like Jerry Frost to shape unique designs and faces.

The cute carved owls from J Crabb Studio drew many cries of delight while the superb carving from Keith Burdon's Red Herring Studio of whales and sea lions were fine examples of the art.

An estimated 900 visitors made this one of the most attended single-day events on the Coast.

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