

Explore VanDusen’s Harvest of Plenty starting to the right of the deck at the Western North America garden.

**1– MAHONIA & SALAL** - First Nations diets were animal based but included seasonal plants, such as spring shoots, the inner bark of trees, summer berries, and fall roots and bulbs. The tall plant with holly-like leaves is tall Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*) whose deep blue, sour fruits were eaten raw or mixed with other fruits and are still used for jelly. Next to it is salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), often used in floral arrangements. Its dark blue to black berries were the most abundant fruit on the BC coast and eaten fresh or dried, combined with other foods or used as a sweetener. Salal fruits are still harvested for jams and preserves.

In spring salal has small bell-like flowers like those of Pacific madrone (*Arbutus*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), and also blueberries, lingonberries, cranberries, and huckleberries (all *Vaccinium* species). While these members of the heather family (Ericaceae) are edible, other family members like *Rhododendron* and *Kalmia* are toxic.

On this tour think of how food and celebration have been woven into the social fabric everywhere, as people have come together to reap, gather, and prepare the bounty of their harvests.

**2 - ALLIUM** – Notice the starburst seedheads of ornamental onions (*Allium*) in the Phyllis Bentall garden. The indispensable onion family (Alliaceae) contributes onions, leeks, garlic, and chives to the cuisines of the world.

### **3 - ORNAMENTAL FOOD GARDEN & KIWI VINE –**

This mixed vegetable and flower garden combines many shapes, textures and colours. Edible flowers like *Nasturtium* ‘Empress of India’ and *Calendula* ‘Candyman Orange’ adjoin the rainbow colours of chard, beets, and kale and the purples of amaranth, whose leaves can be cooked like spinach and whose small seeds can be used like grain. Towering over all are artichokes with dramatic, grey-green foliage and edible buds that open into thistle-like flowers.

On the building beyond notice the clambering foliage of kiwi vines that require male and female plants for pollination and bear fruit in late fall.

### **4 – ROSEMARY**

At the formal Herb Garden brush your hand lightly on the foliage of the tall rosemary plant. The fragrance clinging to your fingers explains this Mediterranean native’s popularity in dishes from meats to breads.

### **5 - ESPALIERS APPLES**

Beside the Children’s Garden a rustic fence supporting espaliered apples is underplanted with ornamental strawberry (*Fragaria* ‘Pink Panda’). These are members of the rose family (Rosaceae) whose bounty includes pears, cherries, plums, blackberries, raspberries and saskatoons (serviceberries). An espaliered orchard is a delightful idea for smaller spaces.

### **6 - HAZELNUT**

Along the left side of the Rhododendron Walk is a European hazelnut tree (*Corylus avellana*). Hazelnuts, a commercial crop of the Fraser valley, need cross-pollination for good production but are wind-pollinated and don’t need bees. Oils and proteins make nuts a valuable food source.

## **7 - OSTRICH FERNS –**

On both sides of the path are ostrich ferns (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), a tall colony-forming fern native to North America, Asia and Europe. In early spring its tightly wound young fiddleheads were eaten by native people and early settlers and are still enjoyed as steamed or stir-fried vegetables. However, due to potential carcinogens, only small quantities of the very youngest shoots should be eaten.

## **8 - MULBERRY –**

The white mulberry (*Morus alba*) is used to raise silkworms and the black mulberry (*Morus nigra*) is grown for its blackberry-like fruits, though fruitless cultivars are available. The fruits, described as both sour and sweet, may be eaten fresh with cream or made into jam.

## **9 - CAMELLIA**

Taking a detour to the right, below the Korean Pavilion, look among the camellias for *Camellia sinensis*, the source of black and green tea and *Camellia oleifera*, the source of camellia oil.

## **10- ROSA × ODORATA ‘MUTABILIS’**

At the right of the crossroads notice the blue-green foliage of this showy, single-flowered China rose and its round red rose hips, that are a good source of Vitamin C.

## **11 - SUGAR MAPLES & CHESTNUT**

Beyond the Meditation Garden up the hill to the right see Asian chestnut trees and to the left within the Canadian Heritage Garden see the sugar maples. Both are significant food trees, one for seed and the other for sugary sap.

## **12 - HERITAGE VEGETABLES –**

Past the fern dell and beside the Canadian Heritage Garden follow the rustic fence lined with raspberry cultivars developed by Dr. Hugh Daubeny of the University of British Columbia. Their names like ‘Haida’, ‘Chilcotin’, ‘Nootka’ and ‘Chilliwack’ reflect their B.C. origin and the adapted First Nations words that created many local place names. Nearby to the left are white bee hives of domestic bees, long valued by farmers for pollinating fruit crops.

The food plants of the Heritage Vegetable Garden are seeded from varieties grown before 1900, with a few from 1700s and 1500s. They hark to a time when farmers selected and saved their own seeds.

The table beet ‘Chiogga’ is named for the town near Venice where it was developed; its popular names “Candystripe” and “Bulls-eye” attest to its showiness when sliced. The bush bean ‘Great Northern’, selected from a gift of beans from a member of the Hidatsa Nation in 1883, reminds us of the legacy of beans, corn, potatoes, and squash given us by the aboriginal peoples of the Americas. The pumpkin ‘Small Sugar’, cultivated since the 1800s, is excellent for small spaces and for pie. Look for vegetables that come from the aster family (such as lettuce), the mustard or cabbage family (broccoli, turnips), the cucumber family (muskmelons, squashes) or the nightshade family (tomatoes, potatoes).

## **13 - SUNFLOWER & AMARANTH**

At the Alma VanDusen garden you’ll be greeted by a riot of sunflowers underplanted with amaranth. A path at the side leads through this island bed. Listen for chickadees visiting their grocery store of sunflower seeds. We value sunflowers for their drama and friendly look but also for oil and seeds. This amazing solar power factory is another New World plant grown and treasured all over the world.