

## **TREE OF THE MONTH – April 2012**

Daybreak Cherry (*Prunus × yedoensis* 'Akebono')

In honour of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, the tree of the month for April is daybreak cherry (*Prunus × yedoensis* 'Akebono').

Daybreak cherry is a cultivar of Yoshino cherry (*Prunus × yedoensis*), a natural hybrid that has been grown in Japan for hundreds of years, and it is the Japanese national flower. "Akebono" means "daybreak" in Japanese.

'Akebono' is an American cultivar that was discovered as a seedling in a California nursery in the 1920s. In Japan, this cultivar is known as 'Amerika'.

Daybreak cherry is common in parks and as a street tree in Vancouver. It blooms in late March or early April and the flowers bloom before the leaves emerge, so the branches are soon covered in solid clouds of pale pink blossoms. The flowers sometimes have a sixth incomplete petal (called a staminode), which can help to identify a tree as an 'Akebono'.

At VanDusen, you can find 'Akebono' growing in the Honorable David C. Lam Cherry Grove.