

## July/August Self Guided Tour 2009

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Leave the deck by the ramp on the right and stand beneath the golden yellow foliage of a pair of **1 – golden false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia* ‘Frisia’)**. The luminous foliage of other such trees can be seen if you scan the wooded horizon on the left from this vantage point. These splashes of brilliant colour highlight the handsome and varied collection of trees in this botanical garden; we will explore some of them on this tour.

As you stroll down the path, note the large urns in front of the flower bed on the left. These contain species of insect-eating or carnivorous plants whose habitat in wetlands and bogs is much threatened. Plant conservation of this type is one of the essential functions of a botanical garden. Look more closely at **2 – yellow pitcher plant (*Sarracenia flava*)**. This species produces a drug in its nectar which paralyzes and eventually kills the insects it captures!

Walk towards the jade-based water fountain then take the bark mulched path on your left which leads along the top of a rise overlooking Livingstone Lake. This area illustrates the varied textures and hues that can be achieved with the imaginative use of drought tolerant grasses. Such plantings survive well through the warm, dry days of summer and demand little of our precious water supplies at this time of year. Note the attractive shade of **3 – blue fescue (*Festuca* ‘Siskiyou Blue’)** a tufted perennial grass that does well in dry, sunny locations.

From the path, pause to take in the view across the lake, then move along the path between the grasses, passing, on the right, the gnarled structure of **4 – common quince (*Cydonia oblonga*)**. This tree produces the down-covered yellow fruit used to make delicious quince paste, much loved in Europe and Australia. On the opposite side of the path are two fragrant **5 - western red cedars (*Thuja plicata*)**. This tree, which can grow to over 35 metres, is the cornerstone of West Coast First Nations culture. It has healing and spiritual powers, and the wood and bark are used to make canoes, totem poles, masks, bentwood boxes, hats, house posts, etc.

Follow the path to the steps, and note on the left **6 - Kamchatka bugbane (*Actaea simplex* ‘Brunette’)** bearing tall, graceful white flowers against striking dark foliage. Ahead is an eye-catching, modern palette of more dark-leaved plants offset with brilliant acid greens.

Look across the path at the striking **7 - golden creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia* ‘Aurea’)** planted with **8 – black lilyturf (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Nigrescens’)**. From the steps, follow this path to the left where this colour scheme continues, featuring many familiar plants dressed in avant garde hues, including **9 – spurge (*Euphorbia* ‘Nothowlee’, commonly sold as *E. Blackbird*)**.

Ahead you will see the striking form of **10 – weeping giant sequoia** (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* ‘Pendulum’) with pendant branches giving a curtain like effect. Take the path to the right here and follow the stone wall up the steps to the Formal Rose Garden. Enjoy the colours and scents here where this elegant display of roses enjoys sustainable gardening practices in well-mulched beds with nitrogen-rich alfalfa and blood meal for nutrients.

Climb the steps through the stone arch and follow the path around the beds of Heritage Roses on the left and a splendid **11 – Himalayan pine** (*Pinus wallichiana*) on the right. Look for the giant pine cones, young and old – they are hard to miss!

Follow the path as it curves, passing on the right the sweeping boughs of a **12 - Japanese white pine** (*Pinus parviflora*). Further, on the left side of the path, are two shapely **13 – goldenrain trees** (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) which, if your timing is right, will show large panicles of yellow flowers which give the tree its name. Just beyond, a dense sweep of **14 - Irish yew** (*Taxus baccata* ‘Fastigiata’) curves to the left and outlines the eastern boundary of the Perennial Garden. Take the path to the left into this spectacular area of botanical beauty and explore the colours and textures of the plantings. Above the granite wall on the right are the golden false acacia that we glimpsed from the entrance which highlight the scene here, as do the massive draping boughs of **15 – European weeping beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* ‘Pendula’) towards which the path now leads. Pause for a moment on a shady bench under this magnificent organic structure.

The tour now leaves the path to explore the Great Lawn which unfolds to the right as you leave the leafy rest stop. This grand slope, once the main fairway when the land was a golf course, is planted with stately beech trees. The collection has several interesting specimens: on the right side of the lawn, look for the delicate foliage of **16 – variegated European beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* ‘Albomarginata’). Cross to the other side of the lawn to see the delicately ruffled leaves of **17 – cock’s-comb beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* ‘Cristata’). Stroll up the lawn and stand under the red and pink leaves of **18 - tricolor beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* ‘Purpurea Tricolor’). Allow the sunlight to illuminate the leafy artistry.

Stand at the top of the beech collection for a panoramic view across the lawn, dominated by stately stands of **coastal Douglas firs** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), softened here and there by the arching branches of **deodar cedars** (*Cedrus deodara*) and the wizened limbs of large **black locust trees** (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) in the island beds on the lawn. The tour ends at this point.

You may wish to explore further or return to the entrance; look for the bright colours of the hydrangea beds to the left of the beech collection. Walk towards the grassy paths between the shrubs – observing a huge **Leyland cypress** ( $\times$  *Cupressocyparis leylandii*) on the left - return to the main path down the hill towards the entrance.