

“How can we ever lose interest in life?  
Spring has come again  
And cherry trees bloom in the mountains”      -Ryokan

After a long winter we hunger for new growth, green shoots and bright flowers. With a severe winter behind us, spring promises both repair and renewal! Welcome back the ever-changing and often unpredictable season of spring.

Leave the deck to the ramp on the right. In front of you, beneath a ponderosa pine is **1-red flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)**. This native woodland shrub bears cheerful deep pink flowers, whose nectar welcomes back migrating hummingbirds. Under the currant look for bright green shoots of the **yellow fawn lilies (*Erythronium tuolumnense*)**. Head down the path and notice the **vine maple (*Acer circinatum*)**, with young red twigs and unfurling leaves.

Continue towards Livingston Lake, and enjoy the reflections near **2-Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*)**. In its' natural setting along the windy shores of BC, this pine grows twisted and bent, hence “contorta”.

Go over the arched stone bridge to your right, and then follow the path on the left. A short stroll over the grass brings you to **3 – Bodnant viburnum (*Viburnum* × *bodnantense*)**, a multi-stemmed shrub developed in the 1930s at Bodnant Gardens, North Wales. Its clusters of fragrant, pink-white flowers bloom on bare stems from late fall to early spring.

To the right is a shrub native to Korea, **white forsythia (*Abeliophyllum distichum*)**, and also **white flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum* ‘White Icicle’)**, a cultivar developed at UBC.

At the foot of the bark path leading into the Magnolia and Pine woods, pause to notice how a woodland garden provides a refuge from intense sunlight, extreme wind, rain and snow. Look upward at the canopy of **lodgepole pines (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*)**, that cradles this area. Enter this sanctuary and discover drifts of naturalized **snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*)** at your feet.

Continue along the path looking to the right at the wonderful fuzzy winter buds of the **4 – Veitch’s magnolia (*Magnolia* × *veitchii*)**. Having dared the worst of winter, these buds will give rise to an explosion of flowers. Look around at the many magnolias here! Also notice the magnificent ***Rhododendron calophytum* var. *calophytum***. Native to the Sichuan province of China, it is extremely hardy, bearing early trusses of bell-shaped pink and white flowers, each painted with a maroon blotch.

Coming out of the woodland, savor the vista of Cypress Pond in front of you. Go left on the path to the sign for the Mediterranean Garden to admire the leafy backdrop of **5 –**

**laurustinus** (*Viburnum tinus* ‘Spring Bouquet’), with pink buds opening to white flowers – defying Mother Nature!  
Below the sign, run your fingers through the fragrant foliage of the creeping **mother-of-thyme** (*Thymus serpyllum*).

Take the left pathway into the Southern Hemisphere Garden until you reach, on the left **6 – Antarctic beech** (*Nothofagus antarctica*). Rub its new, young leaves and notice the cinnamon scent. To the right across the path see three specimens of **Tasmanian tree fern** (*Dicksonia antarctica*), still wearing their winter coats to protect them until warmer weather arrives.

Many plants in this area are tender or borderline hardy species and have suffered during our cold and snowy winter.

The path turns right and down to the zigzag bridge. Look along Heron Lake to the far right and notice the **golden weeping willow** (*Salix* × *sepulcralis* var. *chrysocoma*), whose branches take on a brighter colour as spring approaches. Crossing over the bridge, look on the left for **7 - marsh marigold** (*Caltha palustris*), which welcomes spring with vivid yellow blooms.

Up the hill to the right and enter the Grotto of the Heather garden. Overhead are the plump green leaf buds of **climbing hydrangea** (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*). Its tendrils cling to the porous rock surface. Continue straight ahead into the Heather Garden to a newly planted area of heathers and heaths, which replaced leggy, and overgrown older plants. Walk along the bark path and stop under the **9 – Scots pine** (*Pinus sylvestris*). Notice the attractive ground hugging foliage and dainty pink and white flower of *Cyclamen coum*, and *Cyclamen repandum*, hardy members of the primula family.

On the opposite side of the path, look for the early blooming hybrid **Rhododendron Cilpinense Group** with tiny tight buds waiting to burst open. Both rhododendron and heather are in the same family, Ericaceae.

Walk across the arched stone bridge to **10 – Harry Lauder’s Walking Stick** (*Corylus avellana* ‘Contorta’). The delightful long green catkins are the male flowers. Try to find the tiny female flowers with their bright red stigmas. Underneath is a new planting **winter heath** (*Erica carnea* ‘Golden Starlet’).

Follow the path, keeping to your left. Pass the narrowleaf European **ash tree** (*Fraxinus excelsior* ‘Angustifolia’), with its black buds, and continue to **11- the Lenten rose** (*Helleborus* ‘Frühlingsfreude’ [Orientalis Group]). Native to Greece, it blooms late winter and early spring, with large, long-lasting pink or white, cream or green flowers.

Continue up this path, past the huge **Douglas fir** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), with their dense furrowed bark to **12 – weeping higan cherry** (*Prunus pendula* ‘Pendula Rosea’), crowded with fat little pink flower buds. Underneath are the early leaves of the **oriental poppy** (*Papaver orientale*). Further up the hill you can see the grove of flowering cherries, many recently planted. Welcome spring here, by viewing the cherry blossoms,

as has been done in Japan for centuries. Vancouver's Cherry Blossom Festival begins this year on March 28.

Continue walking to the crest of the hill, then cross over to the grass and approach the sculpture with the three heads. Here enter a garden filled with rhododendrons and other plants native to the Sino-Himalayan region. Already in glorious bloom is **13** – ***Rhododendron oreodoxa var. oreodoxa***.

Return to the paved path and proceed to the left. The primula or primrose genus includes over 400 species. One that flourishes along both side of this path is **14** – **oxlip** (***Primula elatior***).

Walking further up the path towards the edge of the Meditation Garden, find several Japanese camellias. **15** – ***Camellia japonica 'Blood of China'***, ***Camellia japonica 'Elegans'*** and perhaps the finest of all, ***Camellia 'Buddha' [Reticulata Group]***.

Cross over to the Korean Pavilion, a gift to the garden following Expo 1986. Climb the steps and admire the vista from the Great Lawn to the North Shore Mountains.

This ends the Self-Guided Tour, but there is so much more to see. Wander down the Rhododendron Walk toward the buildings. Look for **crocus**, **narcissus**, **scilla** and other small bulbs in bloom. You will also encounter the **creeping forget-me-not** (***Omphalodes verna***), and **lungwort** (***Pulmonaria species***). Enjoy the walk!