

VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN  
5251 OAK STREET  
VANCOUVER, BC V6M 4H1

SEASONAL SELF-GUIDED TOUR  
APRIL 2010  
Contributed by Volunteer Guides

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Please follow the black number and arrow signs for this tour.

As you stand on the deck at the garden entrance facing outward, you are looking at the Phyllis Bentall Garden and pond. There is a lovely collection of water lilies in the pond but they are not yet flowering. The garden was installed in 2005. The trees lining the path to the left of the pond are pink dogwoods which will flower later in the season. Begin the tour by going down the steps leading between these dogwoods and along the path to the end of the pond. Turn right. The first stop is at **1** - several large pots containing a variety of species of insect-eating plants. These plants live in nitrogen-poor soils and obtain most of their nitrogen by digesting the insects and other living things they trap in their various ways. Look for the little Venus Flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) and the various large pitcher plants. There are more than 600 species of carnivorous plants on earth. Walk on towards the lake. On your right is **2** - the silk tassel bush (*Garrya elliptica* 'James Roof') noted for its unusual leathery leaves and long grey catkins with tiny flowers which lack petals. This plant suffered severe winter damage in 2009 and as a result has produced only a few catkins this year (right at the top). The catkins are borne separately on ♂ and ♀ plants. This plant is ♂.

The tour continues past the Jade Fountain. On your left, before the arched bridge, are some lovely Japanese maples. Just beyond these is **3** - a shore pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*), native to Alaska, Coastal BC and south to California. On the right side of the bridge is **4** - a striking weeping Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* 'Pendula'). From the bridge you have a nice view of Livingstone Lake. Further along on the left is **5** - a tall weeping Nootka cypress (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* 'Pendula'). You are now passing on your right a large open area where the holly collection used to be. This area is the location of the new visitor centre that VanDusen is building in order to greatly improve educational capabilities. The hollies were a problem because they are invasive here. They have been given a home in botanical gardens in Pennsylvania and in Hamilton, Ontario, where they are not invasive.

Follow the path to the left beside the lake. On your left and right you will see **6** - several maidenhair trees (*Ginkgo biloba*) and some magnolias. The Ginkgos have been on earth for more than 200 million years and are called 'living fossils'. The ♂ and ♀ reproductive structures (catkins and ovules respectively) are found on separate trees, and pollination is by wind. The fertilized seeds shed by the ♀ trees produce an unpleasant odour as they ripen. For this reason ♂ trees are preferred for landscaping. At VanDusen we have both Ginkgo sexes. The magnolias have been on earth 40 to 50 million years and are insect-pollinated. They lived before bees evolved, and are fertilized by beetles. Further along the path, on your left leading North, is the entrance to a wooded area. As you follow this path you will see on your left, the leaves of the autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*) behind **7** -

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the Moutan or tree peonies (*Paeonia suffruticosa* 'Higurashi'). Tree peonies grow to a height of six feet or more with blooms a foot across. On your right is a short side path leading to **8** - a coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*). This species contains the tallest tree in the world at 379 feet. The tree was found in Northern California in 2006 by a team of scientists after a difficult 4 mile hike into the old growth redwood forest. They named the tree "Hyperion". (The previous record holder was 9 feet shorter.) The soft bark can reach a thickness of 12 inches.

Leave the side path and continue into the wooded area. Here the flowering magnolias and rhododendrons contrast with **9** - the dark, strong lodgepole pines (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*). First Nations people used these for their dwellings, hence their common name. On the left is **10** - the expansive rhododendron (*Rhododendron calophyllum* var. *calophyllum*) with its trusses of large fragrant pink flowers. Ahead is **11** - the shiny evergreen southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), a tree usually associated with the southeastern United States. It needs a sheltered location to survive the winter here. The leaves are protected from ice formation by their hard shiny surface in the same way as is our native arbutus.

Follow the path out of the grove. From here you can see the Cypress Pond with its floating bridge, lovely bald cypresses (*Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum*) across the water, and towards the right, viburnum shrubs. In front of you is **12** - a blue atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* Glauca Group), with bluish-green needles. Notice that these evergreen needles are in clumps of many needles, a characteristic of true cedars. (Other plants commonly called cedars have small scale-like leaves rather than needles - e.g. western red cedar - not a cedar at all.) Going to the left past other blue atlas cedars, you will see on your left **13** - an arching staff tree (*Euonymus myrianthis*) and **14** - a yellow-edged common box (*Buxus sempervirens* "Marginata"). Further along on your right is **15** - a laurel leaf rock rose (*Cistus laurifolius*) with its striking bark.

Turn left at the next path you come to. This will lead you back to Livingstone Lake. Along this path on the left you will see **16** - a large Kobushi tree (*Magnolia kobus* var. *kobus*). On your right are **17** - three young magnolias: 'Tranquility', 'Serene' and 'Sunburst', followed by **18** - the star magnolia (*M. kobus* var. *stellata*). Further along on your right is **19** - a group of three golden rain trees (*Kolreuteria paniculata*), named for their outstanding display of small, butter-yellow star shaped flowers in July, and for their large copper-coloured seed pods, many of which you will see scattered on the ground. There are more magnolias on your left (*M. x soulangiana* 'Alexandrina', and *M. sprengeri* 'Copeland court'). On your right is **20** - a magnificent red alder (*Alnus rubra*) growing beside the lake. Alders bear ♂ and ♀ flowers in separate catkins on the same tree. The pollen from the ♂ catkins is distributed by wind and is a source of discomfort to hay fever sufferers.

This is the end of the tour. To return to the garden entrance, follow the path along the lake and back over the little bridge.