

To begin the tour, turn right at the Plaza, proceed down the ramp and follow the gravel path on your left. Please follow the black and white number and arrow signs.

Notice the distinctively shaped, two-lobed leaves of the **1) ginkgo or maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*)** on either side of the path. This living fossil is the National Tree of China and dates back 270 million years. In 1690, the German botanist Engelbert Kaempler discovered ginkgo trees growing in temple gardens in Japan. He collected seed and upon his return to Europe, planted a seedling in the Utrecht Botanical Garden, where the tree can still be seen flourishing today.

Now turn right onto the mulched path, winding through the Woodland Garden and turn right onto the paved walkway. Immediately to your right is **(2) February daphne (*Daphne mezereum*)**. This hardy shrub combines sensuous beauty with danger. The purple flowers, which appear in February, have an intoxicating perfume but the crimson berries that form later, as well as the leaves and bark, are highly toxic. Continue down the slope past the **(3) Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica* ‘Little Henry’)** on your left. This deciduous, deer-resistant shrub has lightly scented, pure white flowers in summer followed by vivid orange and red foliage in fall.

At the junction, turn left and walk across the floating bridge over Cypress Pond – this bridge is floating on tires! As you step off the bridge, on your left, you will see a **(4) bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum*)**, one of many growing around this pond. Look for the distinctive “knees” of their roots emerging from the water and adjacent shoreline. The State Tree of Louisiana, this deciduous conifer can live for 500 years or more. Its young, acid-green leaves appear in spring, turning a rich bronze in autumn and deepening in color until they are finally shed. The wood of this species is sometimes referred to as “the eternal wood” because it is highly decay-resistant. For this reason, it is a popular choice for building bridges, docks, boats and buildings. It also has medicinal properties and the resin has been used to sterilize wounds.

Continue across the grass along the edge of the pond and up the slope until you find a little bark mulched path on your left. Follow it as it winds through the Mediterranean Garden, to emerge upon a series of plant collections representing regions within the Southern Hemisphere. Turn right at the paved path. Straight ahead of you is the South African Garden, with a colourful swath of pink-flowered **(5) Guernsey lily (*Nerine bowdenii*)**. These autumn-flowering bulbs are native to South Africa, home to 10% of all known plant species. The rich biodiversity of the Cape flora is threatened by climate change and the resulting increase in temperature, drought and wildfire.

Follow the little stone path, through the Guernsey lilies, to the lawn bordering Heron Lake. Then follow the edge of the lake toward the majestic **(6) golden weeping willows (*Salix × sepulcralis* var. *chrysocoma*)**. Introduced by the Spath nursery in Berlin in 1888, this hybrid willow has inspired many artists, including Vincent Van Gogh and Emily Carr, who wrote about it in her journals. However, its beauty is deceptive. In southern Australia, where it has been extensively planted along waterways, it has become invasive and has been declared “a weed of national significance”.

Continue along the lake’s edge and follow the bark mulched path through the Japanese Maples. Centuries of breeding have resulted in over 1,000 different cultivars, with a variety of leaf forms and colours to choose from. Their autumn leaves are most brilliantly coloured when late summer is dry and autumn has bright sunny days and cool nights. These conditions encourage the production of more anthocyanin pigments in the leaves, which are responsible for those rich colours. When late summer is dominated by cloudy days and warm nights, typical in Vancouver, less pigment is produced and the colours are more subdued.

Continue along the mulched path beside the lake, turning left past the **(7) umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*)**. Only distantly related to the true pines (*Pinus* species), this slow growing conifer has distinctive whorls of long, needle-shaped leaves and water-resistant wood with a spicy scent. Over-logged, it is now on the IUCN’s (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species. As a member of Botanic Gardens Conservation International, this is just one of 100 rare and endangered taxa (unique species, subspecies and varieties) growing in VanDusen’s living collections.

Take a few more steps and stand next to the rustic fence for a moment, listening to the sound of the small waterfall to your right. All of the water features in the Garden are interconnected. Water courses

through the Garden from the highest point, at the top of the waterfall in the Sino-Himalayan Garden, to the lowest point at Cypress Pond and then recirculates. This is just one of the water conservation measures undertaken by the Garden.

Retrace your steps and follow the path to the left, toward the main paved pathway, then turn left. On your right is a collection of **(8) linden trees (*Tilia species*)**, also known as lime or basswood. The bark, leaves, berries and creamy white flowers of these trees are all used in Eastern Europe for medicinal purposes. In Autumn, the fallen leaves provide a natural mulch beneath the trees, which protects the roots in winter, adds essential nutrients to the soil and inhibits weeds. Throughout the Garden we use leaf mulch from a variety of species.

Follow the path as it curves to the left, where you will find a **(9) redleaf Norway maple (*Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King')**. Introduced to North America in 1947, this cultivar has become a popular specimen tree. At the next junction, turn right and follow the path up the hill toward the Sino-Himalayan Garden. On your right you will pass a drift of **(10) cutleaf staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta')**, with beautiful red-orange autumn leaves and red, berry-like fruit that provide a winter food source for robins, chickadees, bushtits and towhees.

Continue up the hill. On your right is a grouping of **(11) Himalayan white birch (*Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*)**, with stunning white bark. This species is highly vulnerable to attack by the bronze birch borer, a native beetle that lays its eggs in the inner bark where the larvae feed, damaging the tree's vascular system until the tree eventually dies. Increased stress due to the summer drought of 2006 made these trees even more vulnerable to the borer and all of the Himalayan white birches in the Garden have now succumbed. They are gradually being removed and will be replaced with cultivars of **river birch (*Betula nigra*)**, a species that is resistant to the birch borer and has beautiful peeling bark.

Turn right at the next junction and follow the signs to the Waterfall. You will soon come to two small stone bridges on your right. Between them is a beautiful **(12) golden full moon maple (*Acer shirasawanum* 'Aureum')** – a wonderful name for a wonderful tree! If the nights have been cool and the days warm, you may see the yellow moon in the intensely colored foliage. At the foot of the waterfall, on the left, is a large **(13) weeping katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Morioka Weeping')**, whose leaves smell of cinnamon. The waterfall, ponds and infrastructure of the Garden were designed by Bill Livingstone, the first Superintendent of the Garden. The materials used to build the waterfall and outline the streams and paths were reclaimed from local building excavations, including the False Creek development.

At the next junction, turn left, proceed down the steps and across the main paved path, to the top of the Great Lawn. Stop for a moment to read the educational sign on your right. Did you know VanDusen Botanical Garden was once a golf course, constructed in 1912 on land owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway? When the golf course moved to a new location in 1964, a CPR proposal to build a development on the 55 acre site was rejected, thanks to the efforts of the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association, who then founded VanDusen Botanical Garden. Please ask at the Information Desk in the Visitor Centre if you are interested in the many advantages of becoming a Garden Member.

Behind the educational panel is a large marble sculpture called **(14) 'Observing your Society'** by Inuit sculptor, David Ruben Piqtoukun. Constructed from marble imported from Turkey and Iran, this sculpture is one of 11 created on-site for the Garden's opening in 1975.

Continue down the path, through the David C. Lam Cherry Grove, and turn right at the foot of the hill into the Perennial Garden. On your right are three island beds displaying perennials, a design concept we owe to the vision of British horticulturist Alan Bloom. Cross the paved path to the traditional formal perennial border backed by a yew hedge. At the back of this lush border you will see the tall silvery-green stems and spiny purple flower heads of **cardoos (*Cynara cardunculus*)**, a relative of the edible globe artichoke. Can you find the **(15) stonecrop (*Sedum telephium* 'Purple Emperor')** in this border? This stately plant was given an 'outstanding' award from the International Hardy Plant Union.

Return to the junction where you entered the Perennial Garden and turn right. Continue along the paved path and enter the Formal Rose Garden through the stone arch. Leave the Rose Garden and turn left onto the main paved path. At the junction, follow the bark mulched path straight ahead and keep right until you reach a bench overlooking Livingstone Lake. Next to the bench is a small tree, the **(16) Glastonbury thorn (*Crataegus monogyna* 'Biflora')**, whose legendary history dates back to the 1st century. This tree was planted in honor of R. Roy Forster O.C., the first Curator and Director of VanDusen Botanical Garden. Our tour ends here so take a few moments to enjoy the stunning botanical vista before you return to our new Visitor Centre, one of Canada's greenest buildings.