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

This tour takes you to some of the more spectacular parts of the Garden at this time of year. As always, exact blooming times are in the hands of Mother Nature. As you walk along, be sure to look way up and way down, so as not to miss any of the miracles unfolding.

Begin your tour by exiting onto the plaza of VanDusen's Visitor Centre. Take a moment here to admire the spectacular view, then turn left and walk towards the wooden bridge. As you reach the foot of the bridge, look right to the wooden deck overlooking Livingstone Lake. You'll see "**Departure**", a life-size bronze sculpture by American artist George Lundeen. This sculpture is a recent addition to the garden. Now cross to the end of the bridge. To your right near the bank of the lake, notice the bronze resin sculpture "**Fisher Hauling in the Net**" by Romanian-born artist Gerhard Juchum. Doesn't it fit in perfectly here? This sculpture was donated to the garden by the artist in 1976.

Next, follow the directional arrow towards the Phyllis Bentall Garden. This garden was a generous gift from the Bentall family in memory of their mother. The hardy, hybrid waterlilies growing in the reflecting pool have blooms which open in the latter part of the morning as the sun becomes more intense, and then close in the late afternoon. Some say the scene reminds them of Monet's painting, 'Water Lilies'.

Now, wander through the Fragrance Garden which is just ahead, and then go on to the **1- Herb Garden**. Stop here to gently rub the leaves of some of the plants in these beds, and enjoy their aroma. Today herbs are primarily used to season our food, but they are also used medicinally. In the past, some were believed to ward off evil spirits. Do you grow any of these herbs in your garden? Continue along the path until you reach the **2- golden catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea')**. Commonly known as the Indian Bean tree, or Cigar tree because of the shape of its seed pods, this tree creates a dramatic display in the landscape. Following the tradition begun by Queen Victoria, who always marked a special occasion by planting a tree, this beautiful golden catalpa was planted to celebrate the official opening of VanDusen Garden on August 30, 1975.

At the directional arrow turn left, and proceed up the paved path. On your right, you'll soon see six **3- hardy Japanese fibre banana trees (*Musa basjoo*)**. These "trees" are actually very tall herbaceous perennials with long leaf stalks forming the "stem". Unlike the seedless bananas you buy from the grocery store, this species produces non-edible fruit with lots of seeds and very little pulp. To protect them from cold winter weather, they are wrapped from the end of October until mid-April.

To continue the tour, enter the bark mulched Loderi rhododendron trail which is just to the left of the Minotaur sculpture. This trail features a collection of rhododendron hybrids developed by Sir Edmund Loder at the famous Leonardslee Gardens in England. The **4- Rhododendron 'Loderi King George'** with its large trusses of pale pink-white blooms is considered by many as one of the finest of the Loderi Group. About ten metres ahead on your left is **5- Rhododendron 'Loderi Pink Diamond'** which has pale pink flowers with faint brownish markings in the throat, and just beyond it on your right is **Rhododendron 'Loderi White Diamond'**. They are all lightly scented. On a warm day, the scent from these rhododendrons is more pronounced. What do they smell like to you?

Continue to the end of the trail, then turn left onto the paved path. Walk along until you reach the **6- dove tree (*Davidia involucrata*)**. Look up and you will see why this tree is also called the handkerchief tree, or the ghost tree. Large, papery, white bracts (specialized leaves) hang from the branches hiding small greenish-white clusters of flowers. It is a lovely sight! By the way, Père Armand David, a French missionary and naturalist discovered this tree while plant hunting in China in 1869.

Now turn right following the directional arrow. You are on the Rhododendron Walk. As you walk along, notice how unique each of the rhododendrons is. Stop at **7- Rhododendron fulvum** which you will see on your left. Aren't its large, glossy, dark green leaves with their cinnamon-coloured indumentum (a covering of fine hairs on the underside of the leaf) beautiful? Some rhododendrons have indumentum as a protection against moisture loss during dry periods, and also against extremes in temperature. Now continue up the path, turn right at the directional arrow, and walk towards the wooden bench.

Behind the bench is **8- Magnolia cavaleriei var. platypetala (synonym Michelia platypetala)**. Notice its glossy, dark green leaves. This evergreen magnolia has beautiful, bright white flowers which give off a lovely scent. Now, retrace your steps back to the Rhododendron Walk. More rhododendrons abound on this pathway, along with an abundance of groundcovers, ferns, and hostas. **Hostas** are the mainstay of the shade garden. They are herbaceous perennials, and are noted for their variety in leaf colour, size, texture, and shape. Some, such as the Fragrant Plantain Lily (*Hosta plantaginea*) which is slightly up the path, even have fragrant flowers. Hostas are named for Nicholas Thomas Host (1761-1834), an Austrian botanist, who was the personal physician of the Holy Roman Emperor, Francis II.

Continue up the path towards the educational sign that tells the story of "The Aristocrats of Gardens". Next to the sign, notice the beautiful **9- orangebark stewartia (*Stewartia monadelpha*)**. A member of the tea family and native to Japan and Korea, its bark just has to be touched! A few steps ahead on your right is a **golden full moon maple (*Acer shirasawanum* 'Aureum')** with its beautiful, yellow-green, palm-shaped foliage.

Walk further up the path until you reach another educational sign. Stop here to admire the peeling, cinnamon-brown bark of the **10- paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*)**. Unlike typical maple trees, its leaves are trifoliate (divided into three distinct leaflets), and coarsely toothed. Native to China, this tree is difficult to propagate.

Look to your right to see the bed that houses VanDusen's Japanese collection. The **11- *Rhododendron yakushimanum*** is native to Yakushima Island in Japan. Look at the underside of its leaves to see the indumentum. Is it similar to that which you saw previously? At the very end of this bed you will find a **12- Japanese larch (*Larix kaempferi*)**. This coniferous tree has needles that grow in distinctive whorls (small bunches). Unlike most conifers, it is deciduous, and sheds its needles in autumn. Look up, and note the abundance of cones. This is because this tree commonly retains its cones for many years.

Cross the path. At the entrance to the Canadian Heritage Garden is a **13- Himalayan spruce (*Picea smithiana*)**. This tree was planted when the area was still part of the Sino-Himalayan Garden. Its long, hanging branches allow it to shed snow easily. This tree is noted for having the longest needles of any spruce, up to five centimetres in length.

Now enter the Canadian Heritage Garden which opened in 1989. Roy Forster, VanDusen's first Garden Director, wanted to represent the "natural bio-geographic diversity of Canada" here. Just past the split rail fence is a grove of **14- sugar maple trees (*Acer saccharum*)**, whose leaf is featured on the Canadian flag. Not well suited to our climate, these trees remain quite small here, but in their native Quebec they can reach 40 metres in height. Sugar maple trees are the source of delicious maple syrup and maple sugar. They are underplanted with such 'spring ephemerals' as the **white wakerobin (*Trillium grandiflorum*)**, **celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*)**, and **wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)**.

Follow the curve to your right. You are entering the part of the Canadian Heritage Garden that represents the Boreal Forest (Taiga), which covers about three quarters of Canada's land mass. Stop at **15- black spruce (*Picea mariana*)**. This tree is a transcontinental species, and can be found from one end of Canada to the other. The principal commercial value of black spruce is as pulpwood. The long fibres of its wood add strength to pulp and paper products. Note the **jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*)** across the way. It is the dominant tree in the southern Boreal Forest. Growing in rocky shallow soil, it is gnarled and lopsided, reminiscent of a view made famous by Canadian painter Tom Thomson.

Continue along the gravel path. When you reach the grove of **trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)** stop, and take a moment to listen to their leaves rustling in the breeze. As you keep walking, you'll soon pass the Medicine Wheel on your left and the Heritage Orchard on your right. Just before turning right at the directional arrow, look across to **16- Eddie's white wonder dogwood (*Cornus 'Eddie's White Wonder'*)**, a hybrid of Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*) and eastern flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and the most famous tree ever developed in Canada. It has won numerous honours including a nomination for Chelsea Plant of the Centenary, chosen for the decade 1963-1972. Read the plaque in front of it to learn more about this amazing tree and its local origins. Now follow the directional arrow, and proceed towards the honeybee hives. The bees who call these hives home busy themselves collecting pollen from around the garden. Continue along the path, and then turn right, crossing the rock bridge into the Heritage Vegetable Garden. The vegetables that are harvested from these beds during the summer are donated to the local food bank.

Next, head towards the broad paved path. At the directional arrow, turn right. Enjoy the plantings on either side of the path as you walk along. The next stop is **17- Chinese fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*)** which you will see on your left. Notice the spiny, flattened, lance-shaped leaves. This tree is a prized timber tree in China for its soft, durable, aromatic wood which is resistant to insects and rot.

Proceed a bit further down the path. On your right, you'll soon see the **18- princess tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*)**. Notice the distinctive eyelike formations on the trunk, and look up to see the pale purple, foxglove-like flowers that appear before any foliage emerges. This tree is native to China. It is said that it was once the custom to plant a princess tree to celebrate the birth of a baby girl, and when she was eligible for marriage, the tree was cut down to make items for her dowry. The seeds of the Paulownia are numerous, soft, and papery. In the 19th century, they were used to pack Chinese porcelain for export.

Now walk straight ahead across the lawn to the **Korean Pavilion**, a gift to the garden from the Korean people at the close of Expo '86 which was held in Vancouver. Be sure to go right inside to have a look at the lovely artwork. Growing nearby are some Korean native plants such as South Korea's national flower, the **Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*)** and **white nodding bell (*Campanula takesimana*)**. Next walk down the stone steps and veer to the right down the grassy slope. Looking to your left, you will soon see a large expanse of lawn, a reminder that VanDusen was once a golf course. Continue down the lawn, passing the hydrangeas beds, and the large Leyland cypress on your right.

Keep going until you reach the paved path in front of the Lathhouse, then turn left and walk through an arbour of graceful weeping beeches. Walk through the Perennial Garden, then turn right at the directional arrow. Continue on down the path. End your tour in spectacular fashion by strolling the length of the Laburnum Walk, a highlight of VanDusen this month. The pendulous, bright yellow blooms of **19- hybrid goldenchain trees (*Laburnum × watereri 'Vossii'*)** give off a wisteria-like scent and are beautifully set off by the purple alliums planted beneath.

This is the end of the self-guided tour. Continue on your own to explore more of the garden, or return to the entrance which you can see from this spot.