

"I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June." – L.M.Montgomery

Please follow the black & white arrows and number signs. Parts of the tour are not wheelchair accessible. This tour will take approx. 40 minutes or longer, depending on your walking pace and choices you make.

Weeping trees occur in nature, but most weeping trees are cultivars, having been selected or bred for their pendulous branches that can cascade to the ground.

To begin the tour, leave the Visitor Centre and turn left toward the small wooden footbridge over the stream. To the left of the bridge is a **1 – weeping Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* 'Pendula')**. Note the twisted form of its trunk and branches, in sharp contrast to the natural upright form of our native Douglas-fir, much loved by BC's lumber industry and which you will see later. This bridge, as well as other new structures, was built with western redcedar recycled from a wooden walkway removed for the construction of the Visitor Centre, completed in 2012.

Continue up the slope ahead, past the BC jade drinking fountain on your left, and then take the paved path to the right, observing the variety of **Ornamental Grasses**. Stop at the **2 - weeping giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum')** with its interpretive sign. At the intersection, take the path to the right and walk through the **Black Garden** where plants with nearly black flowers, foliage or fruit are contrasted by various shades of lime and gold foliage. Before you reach the lakes at the end of the Black Garden, turn and go back to the intersection. Follow the curved stone wall to the right and climb the steps into the **Formal Rose Garden**. This landscape style with a pattern of formal beds and paths in an embroidery-like design is called 'parterres de broderie' after the late 17th century gardens at Versailles. These modern varieties of **floribunda**, **grandiflora** and **hybrid tea roses** have been chosen for their resistance to disease and pests, (no pesticides or herbicides are used in the Rose Garden) and can withstand the Pacific Northwest's cool, wet spring weather. The busts of David Douglas and Carl Linnaeus are tributes to these two plant explorers and also to Linnaeus as the father of modern botanical nomenclature.

Pass through the stone arch to the **3 - Heritage Roses**, generally considered to be roses introduced before 1900. They represent centuries of cultivation. To the right of the path are the **China roses**, the oldest of the Heritage Roses, some grown in China for over 1000 years and used to introduce repeat flowering in most modern roses. On your left, large oval beds feature nine major groups of heritage roses including: **rugosa roses**, hardy perpetual bloomers with rugose (corrugated) leaves; **pimpinellifolia roses**, early bloomers with creamy-white flowers including the **burnet rose**, native to Europe and northwest Africa; **alba roses**, grown in Europe since 100 CE (Common Era) and among the most ancient of all cultivated plants, shade tolerant with white or pink flowers. If time allows, you might like to explore more of the Heritage Rose beds and then return to this point.

Continue on the path to the four way intersection. Turn left to enter the perennial garden. This position gives you a splendid view of curving lines of three integrated **weeping beeches (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula')** at the other end of the path. As you walk through the perennial garden, focus on the left as you will return this way. The traditional perennial border is backed by an **Irish yew hedge (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata')** which gently curves to maximize the sun and provide shelter from the wind. After you have looked at the flowers and plants in the border, continue along the path, through the arch of weeping beeches.

On the left is a grouping of five small weeping trees with distinctive, umbrella-like shapes, including three **4 - Camperdown elms (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii')**. In the early 19th Century a contorted branch of a wych elm was discovered growing along the ground at Camperdown House in Scotland. A cutting was taken of this odd mutation and it continues to be propagated today, usually grafted onto wych elm root stock with its deeply grooved bark. In this grouping is a **5 - weeping pussy willow (*Salix caprea* 'Weeping Sally')**. Return to the perennial garden where you are able to wander around the island beds which are separated from the Great Lawn by a low stone wall. The same quarry in the north of Vancouver Island supplied this stone and the stone for the Parliament Buildings in Victoria and the Hotel Vancouver. Note the lovely bright yellow-green colour of the **golden false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia')** trees above.

Back at the four-way intersection, turn left and walk a short distance up the path. On your left you will see a **6 - pink weeping spring cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula* 'Beni-shidare')**. This is the

beginning of the Honourable David C. Lam Cherry Grove, and you will find more of these trees as you walk up the path. At the end of the bed on the left is the perfect umbrella shape of **7 - Snow Fountains weeping cherry tree (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula* ‘Snofozam’)**. These will have lovely orange, gold and red leaves in the fall. Continue past the Haiku stone to the crest of the hill. Here you can see a number of sculptures. Walk across the grass to your left to the marble statue with three faces called ‘**Observing Your Society**’. Carved by renowned Canadian Inuit artist **David Ruben Piqtoukun**, it is one of eleven large stone sculptures created on site by a group of international sculptors in 1975, the year the Garden was opened.

Enter the small, bark-mulched path to the right. **Himalayan blue poppies (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*)**. bloomed here in May and you may see traces of them in front of the spectacular **8 - giant Himalayan lilies (*Cardiocrinum giganteum*)** . ‘Cardio’ refers to this plant’s distinctive heart-shaped leaves. While not difficult to grow, a seed can take seven years to develop into a flowering plant.

Return to the sculpture and back to the paved path at the drinking fountain and look for the information sign about the history of VanDusen Botanical Garden, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Continue up the path to the four-way junction and turn right walking down the main path, then take the next left.

At the next 4-way intersection; on the far right corner is the highly unusual **9 - weeping maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba* ‘Pendula’)**, unusual because instead of growing out horizontally, the pendulous branches hang downwards. Here there is an interpretive sign with more information about ginkgo trees. Follow the stream up to the waterfall which was designed and built by Bill Livingstone in the 1970s. At the top of the waterfall is the disused Municipality of Point Grey Reservoir (built in 1912), providing the height of the waterfall. All the other water features - lakes, ponds and connecting streams in the garden - are also human-made. Next to the pool, the graceful **weeping katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* ‘Morioka Weeping’)** grows vigorously and requires regular pruning. Its shape mimics the form of the waterfall.

Continue up the main path to the final intersection and turn left, walking downwards to reach the main paved path. If you have the time and the inclination, you may turn right onto the path and visit the Elizabethan-style **Maze**, the **Vegetable Garden**, the **Bee Hives** and the beautiful **Alma VanDusen Garden** with its display of delphiniums. You would then return this way. Otherwise, turn left and continue past the stone entrance to the **Meditation Garden** on your left. When you reach the traditionally-painted **Korean Pavilion**, turn and look upwards to see the climbing **10 – Kiftsgate rose (*Rosa filipes* ‘Kiftsgate’)**. This tough rambler rose is vigorous, and the largest one in Britain measures 50 feet high by 90 feet across. The fragrant white flowers will be followed by masses of tiny orange-red hips. Begin your journey down the **Rhododendron Walk** to your right. On the left you will meet an old friend, **11- Snow Fountains weeping cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula* ‘Snofozam’)**. This is a new planting in a bed which has recently been transformed into the **Japanese Collection**, featuring plants of Japanese origin. When you reach the **12 - orangebark stewartia (*Stewartia monadelpha*)**, stop to see if it is still bearing its small white flowers.

Mid-way down the path is the Garden’s main collection of **hydrangeas**. When you reach the intersection at the bottom of the Walk, continue to follow the curving path which leads past the Minotaur sculpture. Here seasonal displays on both sides of the path feature colourful, exotic plants and annuals. On your right is a large **13 - Borne weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica* ‘Bornyensis’)**. “Sylvatica” indicates a woodland plant. This unusual beech cultivar was selected in Borne, in the Rhône-Alpes region of France, and introduced to the French nursery trade in about 1870. Take the path to the right when you reach the spreading **golden catalpa tree (*Catalpa bignonioides* ‘Aurea’)** which was planted to commemorate the opening of the garden. After passing the Glasshouse on your right (used as a classroom), turn to the right and you will see near the steps, the **14 - weeping blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* ‘Glauca Pendula’)**, one of the true cedars and native to the Atlas Mountains in northern Africa (Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia). A dramatic landscape tree, it is prized for its graceful flowing nature and beautiful silvery blue-green needles. To the left is the **White Garden**, surrounded by hedging to give the sense of a garden room. Here you will find white blooms including **15 – hybrid mock orange (*Philadelphus* × *purpureomaculatus* ‘Belle Étoile’)** in the far right corner. The Latin *purpureomaculatus* means “purple-spotted” and you should be able to find a purple blotch in the centre of each of its large fragrant blooms. The white garden was a design concept introduced by Vita Sackville-West in her garden at Sissinghurst, England.

You may return to the Visitor Centre past the **Phyllis Bentall Garden**, with its formal pool and interesting plants. For more information about the Visitor Centre’s role in the Garden’s commitment to sustainability please visit the **Information Desk** at the garden entrance. We hope you have enjoyed your tour, and will come back to visit us again soon.

Eve Harrison 2015-5-30 11:00 AM

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