

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

As you wander through the Garden enjoying the vistas, think of two special people who played a vital role in its creation. In the 1970s, Bill Livingstone, a self-taught landscape designer and former Deputy-Superintendent of the Vancouver Park Board, designed the Garden's interconnected water features, lakes, streams and elegant rock work. Roy Forster CM, VanDusen's founding Curator and Garden Director, then filled in this blank canvas with 50 distinct carefully curated collections of plants from around the world, designed to blend seamlessly within the landscape.

Begin your tour by entering the plaza from the Visitor Centre. Take a moment to look out over Livingstone Lake, named for Bill Livingstone, then turn left and cross the wooden bridge. Follow the arrow sign toward the Phyllis Bentall Garden, a formal perennial garden generously gifted by Vancouver's Bentall family in memory of their mother. Continue on through the Fragrance Garden, taking in the scents, and stop at the Herb Garden just ahead. Gently rub the leaves to enjoy the aroma of some of these plants. In Western culture, herbs are primarily used to season our food but many cultures have used herbs medicinally for centuries. Further along the path is the **1- golden catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides 'Aurea'*)**, also known as the Indian bean tree or cigar tree, suggested by the shape of its seed pods. Following the tradition begun by Queen Victoria, who marked a special occasion by planting a tree, this golden catalpa was planted to celebrate the official opening of VanDusen Botanical Garden on August 30, 1975.

Walk a few steps to the arrow sign and proceed up the paved path. Soon you'll see a number of **2 - hardy Japanese fibre banana trees (*Musa basjoo*)**. These 'trees' are actually very tall herbaceous perennials with long fibrous leaf stalks forming the tall 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. In summer, their dramatic foliage provides a focal point, creating the feel of a tropical jungle.

Enter the bark mulched Loderi rhododendron trail just to the left of the Minotaur sculpture. This trail features a collection of rhododendron hybrids developed by Sir Edmund Loder, who first crossed *Rhododendron griffithianum* with *R. fortunei* to produce a plant with the best features of both parents. The **3- Rhododendron 'Loderi King George'** with its large trusses of fragrant pale pinkish white blooms is considered one of the finest of the Loderi Group. About ten metres ahead on your left is **4- Rhododendron 'Loderi Pink Diamond'**. These rhododendrons are all scented, and their scent is more pronounced on a warm day. What do they smell like to you?

Continue to the end of the trail and turn left onto the paved path. Continue to the **5 - dove tree (*Davidia involucrata*)** on the corner. Look up. Can you guess why this tree is also called the handkerchief tree or ghost tree? Large papery white bracts (modified leaves) hang from the branches, directing pollinators to small greenish-white clusters of flowers. Père Armand David, a French missionary and naturalist discovered this tree in 1869 while plant hunting in China.

Now turn right and follow the arrow sign onto the Rhododendron Walk. On your right you will soon see a collection of colourful, fragrant **6 - deciduous azaleas**. Thriving in full sun, deciduous azaleas tend to develop a more open, airy structure with fewer flowers when grown in partial shade. Azaleas are members of the genus *Rhododendron*, but azalea flowers have only five or six pollen-bearing stamens, while rhododendron flowers have ten or more. As you walk along, count the stamens on some of the flowers and see if you can tell which ones are azaleas and which are rhododendrons. Some can fool you!

Continue up the path until you reach **7- Rhododendron fulvum** on your left. Although it is no longer in bloom, take a moment to admire its glossy, dark green leaves. Then look on the underside of a leaf to see the cinnamon-coloured indumentum (covering of fine hairs). Many rhododendron species have this adaptation to protect them from moisture loss during dry periods and from extremes in temperature.

More rhododendrons abound on this pathway, accented by a variety of groundcovers, ferns, and hostas. Hostas are the mainstay of the shade garden. These herbaceous perennials are noted for their variety in leaf colour, size, texture, and shape. Some, such as the fragrant plantain lily (*Hosta plantaginea*) even have fragrant flowers. The genus *Hosta* is 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 “The Aristocrats of Gardens”. Next to it is an **8- orangebark stewartia (*Stewartia monadelpha*)**, a member of the tea family (Theaceae), and native to Japan and Korea. Its bark just has to be touched! Further up the path, stop at the next educational sign to admire the peeling, cinnamon-brown bark of **9- paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*)**. Its coarsely toothed trifoliate leaves (divided into three distinct leaflets) have a glaucous (greyish) coating on their undersides.

Just ahead on the right side of the path is VanDusen’s Japanese collection. The **10- Chinese scholar tree or Japanese pagoda tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*)** is native to China and Korea, but it was first described from a cultivated specimen in Japan. In midsummer clusters of fragrant, creamy white, pea-like blossoms open when few other trees are blooming. After the flowers are pollinated, they develop fruit which resemble strings of pearls in green pods. Proceed to the end of the path where you will find **11- Japanese larch (*Larix kaempferi*)**, a coniferous tree with needles in distinct whorls (bundles), and the only deciduous conifer native to Japan. Look up to see the abundance of cones, which remain on the tree for many years.

Cross the path. At the entrance to the Canadian Heritage Garden which opened in 1989 is a towering **12- Himalayan spruce (*Picea smithiana*)**. This tree was planted when the bed was part of the Sino-Himalayan Garden. Its long, hanging branchlets are an adaptation to allow it to shed snow easily, preventing damage during heavy snowfalls. Its needles are up to 5 cm long, the longest of any spruce.

Walk along the country lane and pass through the split-rail fence. To your right is a grove of **13- sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)**, native to Eastern Canada. This is one of ten Canadian maple species that inspired the stylized maple leaf on the Canadian flag. Not adapted to our rainy climate, sugar maples remain quite small here and are prone to disease. Sugar maples are the source of delicious maple syrup and in their native Quebec they can reach 40 metres tall.

Follow the curve to your right to enter the area of the Canadian Heritage Garden that represents the Boreal Forest (Taiga), which covers about three quarters of Canada’s land mass. Stop at **14- black spruce (*Picea mariana*)**. This transcontinental species can be found from the East Coast to the West Coast. Its main commercial value is as pulpwood, with its long wood fibres that add strength to pulp and paper products. Note the **jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*)** across the path, the dominant tree in the southern Boreal Forest. Growing in rocky shallow soil, this gnarled lopsided tree is reminiscent of a scene made famous by Canadian painter Tom Thomson.

Continue a little further along the gravel path until you come to **15- sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*)**. This plant has a confusing common name. Its foliage is fernlike, but look at the underside of the leaves. Do you see any sori (spore producing structures)? Sweet fern is a shrub in the sweet gale family (Myricaceae). Gently rub one of the leaves to release its sweet fragrance. Continue along the gravel path a bit further. On your right, you’ll soon see **16- white sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)**. If you look closely at its foliage, you’ll notice that some leaves are unlobed, some are bilobed (mitten shaped), and some have three lobes. White sassafras has culinary significance. Traditionally, the dried leaves were ground up and used as a thickener and flavouring in Creole cuisine, while the roots were used to make the original root beer.

Continue until you reach the arrow sign and follow it to the paved path. Turn right and proceed to the foot of the path where you will find a **17- princess tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*)**. Look up to see the pale purple, foxglove-like flowers which appear before the foliage emerges. This tree is native to China, and extremely fast-growing. In China it was custom to plant a princess tree to celebrate the birth of a baby girl. When she was eligible for marriage, the tree was cut down to make items for her dowry. The soft papery seeds of Paulownia are numerous and were used in 19th century China as packing material for exporting Chinese porcelain.

Now cross the path to the grassy area left of the Korean Pavilion. Go down the grassy slope until you reach **18 - deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)**, a species of true cedar (*Cedrus*) native to the Himalayas. The national tree of Pakistan, its name comes from the Sanskrit *devadāru*, which means ‘timber of the gods’. Historically, deodar cedar was used to construct religious temples and as landscaping around temples. Note its silvery-green foliage, level branches and gently drooping branchlets. Continue down the lawn, veering right, past the hydrangea beds and the large Leyland cypress.

Keep going until you reach the Lathhouse. Then turn left and walk through an arbour of graceful weeping beeches, through the Perennial Garden, then turn right at the arrow sign. Continue on down the path. End your tour by strolling through the winding Laburnum Walk, a highlight of VanDusen this month. The pendulous, bright yellow blooms of the **19- hybrid goldenchain trees (*Laburnum × watereri* 'Vossii')** have a wisteria-like scent and are 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.