

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 the main doors of VanDusen's Visitor Centre, which officially opened on October 23, 2011. Take a moment to admire the spectacular view, then turn left and walk towards the wooden bridge. As you reach the end of the bridge, look to your right towards Livingstone Lake, and you'll see the bronze resin sculpture "*Fisher Hauling in the Net*" by 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. Do they remind you of Monet's painting, 'Water Lilies'?

Continue the tour by walking past the Fragrance Garden, then veer to the right across the lawn. Soon you'll reach the Stanley Smith Garden, an area which will undergo renovation in the fall. Notice the 1- flaky juniper (*Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Star'). This slow growing dwarf juniper is noted for the colour of its foliage, and for its chunky, short branches which give year round colour and texture. Walking a little further around the bed in a clockwise direction, you'll soon come to a small gravel path. Follow it to 2- weeping Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Inversa'). This prostrate, creeping cultivar has a large spread, and can be trained to droop gracefully over garden features and rockeries.

Now retrace your steps back to the lawn, and turn left to see the 3 - golden catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea'). 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 the Garden on August 30, 1975.

Following the directional arrow, walk just past the Alpine Troughs. In front of you, you'll soon see several 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.

Cross to the other side of the paved path towards the Minotaur sculpture, and enter the bark mulched Loderi rhododendron trail. This trail features a collection of rhododendron hybrids developed by Sir Edmund Loder at the famous Leonardslee Garden in England. The 4- *Rhododendron* 'Loderi King George', described by many as the finest of the Loderi Group, has large pink-white blooms and is slightly scented. About ten metres ahead on your left is 5 - *Rhododendron* 'Loderi Pink Diamond', and just beyond that on your right you'll see *Rhododendron* 'Loderi White Diamond'. On a warm day, the scent from these rhododendrons is more pronounced. What do they smell like to you?

Keep walking until you reach 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 or ghost tree. In May, large white bracts hang from the branches hiding small greenish-white clusters of flowers. It is a lovely sight!

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 burnt orange indumentum (a covering of fine hairs on the underside of the leaf) beautiful? Some rhododendrons have this adaptation as a protection against moisture loss during dry periods, and also against extremes in temperature. Now continue up the path, and turn right at the directional arrow towards the wooden bench.

Behind the bench is 8- *Magnolia cavaleriei* var. *platypetala* (synonym *Michelia platypetala*). Notice its glossy, dark green leaves, and beautiful, bright white flowers which have a lovely scent. Now, retrace your steps back to the Rhododendron Walk. Just ahead on the left you'll see 9- Chinese dogwood (*Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*), a beautiful disease-resistant tree noted for its layered branching pattern. More rhododendrons abound on this pathway, along with an abundance of groundcovers, hostas, and ferns. 10- Ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) is a popular ornamental plant in gardens. Its common name is derived from its fronds which resemble ostrich plumes. The ostrich fern's immature fronds known as fiddleheads, are edible, and have a flavour reminiscent of asparagus or green beans. (By the way, other fern species provide edible "fiddleheads").

Continue up the path towards the educational sign that tells the story of "The Aristocrats of Gardens". Next to the sign, notice the beautiful 11- 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'). This graceful tree with its beautiful, yellow-green, palm-shaped foliage is much loved in Japan.

Walk further up the path until you reach another educational sign. Stop here to admire the peeling, papery, cinnamon-brown bark of the **12 - 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 **13- Rhododendron yakushimanum** is native to Yakushima Island in Japan. Look at the underside of its leaves to see the indumentum. Is it the same as the previous one? At the very end of this bed you will find a **14- Japanese larch** (*Larix kaempferi*). This coniferous tree has needles that grow in distinctive whorls (small bunches). Unlike most conifers its needles all fall off in the autumn. 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 **15 - 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, and it 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. Just past the split rail fence is a grove of **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.

Follow the curve to your right until you reach **16- black spruce** (*Picea mariana*). This tree is called a transcontinental tree because it is found from one end of Canada to the other, and grows in all the provinces. Like other spruce varieties, its branches feel rough because projections remain where the needles were attached to the branch. Notice that the needles are unfriendly (prickly to the touch), but roll easily between the fingers. Now, take the little stepping stone path, and walk to **17- sweet fern** (*Comptonia peregrina*). This plant is not a fern, but a low deciduous shrub with fernlike foliage. The leaves give off a sweet scent when crushed, hence its common name. A tea can be made from the leaves.

When you reach the gravel pathway, turn left. Keep walking. You'll pass the Medicine Wheel on the left, the Heritage Orchard on the right, and finally the Canadian Medicinal Garden also on the right. Now, turn right at 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 will be donated to the local food bank. The blue Fordham tractor in the centre of this garden was brought here from the former Stanley Park Children's Farm.

Next, head towards the broad paved path. At the directional arrow, proceed eastward, and enjoy the plantings on either side as you walk along. When you reach **18- pigsqueak** (*Bergenia purpurascens*), stop and have some fun! Would you like to hear a pig squeak? Gently rub one of the thick, leathery leaves between your fingers. Can you hear a grunting noise? This plant is commonly known as pigsqueak because of the noise made when the leaves are rubbed. This herbaceous, evergreen perennial is known for being incredibly hardy and reliable. Walk further down the path, and look to your left. You will see the Meditation Garden. This was a gift from the Vancouver Garden Club. The Chinese characters at the top of the archway say "Garden of Rest". It is a cool, quiet place to sit and reflect.

Do you see the **19- princess tree** (*Paulownia tomentosa*) across the path? Notice the distinctive eyelike formations on the trunk, and look up to see the large, showy, tubular, purple flowers that appear in May before any foliage emerges. This tree is native to China. It is said that it was once the custom to plant a princess tree when a baby girl was born, and when she was eligible for marriage, the tree was cut down to make her wedding chest.

Now walk straight ahead across the lawn to the **Korean Pavilion**. Be sure to go right inside to have a look at the lovely artwork. This structure was a gift to the garden from the Korean people at the close of Expo '86 which was held in Vancouver. Growing around it are some Korean native plants. Next walk down the stone steps and veer to the right down the grassy slope. Looking to your left, you will see a large expanse of lawn, a reminder that VanDusen was once a golf course. Continue down the lawn, past the hydrangeas and the large Leyland cypress on your right. Keep going.

When you reach the paved path in front of the Lathhouse, turn left and pass 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. A rule of thumb is that these trees are at their peak around the last week of May. The pendulous, yellow blooms of **20- hybrid goldenchain trees** (*Laburnum* × *watereri* 'Vossii') give off a wisteria-like scent and are beautifully set off by the purple alliums planted beneath.

This marks 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.