

WEEKLY UPDATE - APRIL 23 - 30, 2016

**“... And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,
Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells,
As fair as the fabulous asphodels...”**

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), “The Sensitive Plant”

What a little heat wave we’ve had!! Green and growing things seem to be on steroids!! There is very little to report.

1. Please remember to record your statistics.

Guide Goings On

- 1. Thursday, May 5 - the monthly Gardener’s Walk will be led by Dean M. through the Oak Knoll and along the Rhododendron Path.**
- 2. Thursday, May 12 - Douglas Justice from UBC Botanical Garden will speak on “How trees can help make Vancouver the greenest city in the world”.**

Garden Goings On

- 1. Living Color - A Photo Exhibit by Raymond Lo
April 12 - May 15
Discovery Room in the Visitors Center**
- 2. IT’S HERE!! THE PLANT SALE!!
Sunday, April 24 - 10:00am- 4:00pm
The Great Lawn**
- 3. Rain Barrel Truck Sale
Saturday, April 30 - 10:00am-3:00pm
In the driveway of Oak St.**

Dogwood Days

Our beautiful dogwoods (*Cornus nuttalli*) are in glorious bloom right now in parks and gardens and along Vancouver’s spacious boulevards. The spectacular tree in the church courtyard on my street corner was a very scruffy specimen a month ago; it’s hard to believe that this is the same tree

and its seemingly overnight transformation certainly exemplifies Anne Morrow Lindbergh's reflection on "miracles like white dogwood."

The garden has many examples of *Cornus* "Eddie's White Wonder" which was hybridized in Vancouver in 1945 by B.C. nurseryman and rosarian H.M. Eddie (1881-1953). The small tree that was moved into the garden in 1994 from the garden of the hybridizer's son and which is featured in this month's *Gazette* can be found in bed 135B in the Canadian Heritage Garden. In 1972, it received the Award of Merit from the RHS and in 1977, a First class Certificate from the RHS. In 1986, it was chosen as the Centennial Tree for Vancouver's Centennial!

More on Chestnuts

The *Castanea sativa* (sweet chestnut) at Kits Beach mentioned in the last "WU" is highlighted in the new Living City Field Guide, *Vancouver Tree Book*, by David Tracey which was featured in a recent Steve Whysall "In the Garden" column and which I picked up at Chapters on the weekend, the last copy. It is a very popular book! It is also available in the giftshop.

The term "buckeye" is generally reserved for the New World members of the *Aesculus* family. In VanDusen Garden, the red buckeye, *Aesculus pavia* produces dark reddish pink panicles which are attractive to both hummingbirds and bees. One specimen, *A.pavia* "Atrosanguinea", is perfectly placed in bed 107 in the Eastern North American Garden very near the Visitors Center and close to the hummingbird feeders. When crossed with the common horse chestnut, *A. hippocastanum*, the red horse chestnut, *Aesculus X carnea* "Brioti", is the result, with the same red panicles. It is a popular tree for parks and boulevards; in the garden, it can be found in beds 32, 157 and 159.

The Indian Lily

"... the camas lilies gaze out above the grass
from their tender blue eyes... "
Lynn Ungar, "Camas Lilies"

On the most recent Gardener's Walk, Tomas showed us the *Camassia leichtinii* and *C. quamash*, large and small camas lilies respectively, he had planted in the grasses bed. A lovely addition to this area of the garden, they are in full bloom now, their blue eyes gazing over Livingston Lake. Like the bluebells, camas lilies belong to the Asparageae family and like the breathtaking British bluebell woods, camas meadows in full bloom are strikingly beautiful.

Besides being an ornamental plant, camas bulbs were an important food staple for First Nations people. They were pit-roasted or boiled, resulting in a sweet potato-like food; the dried bulbs could be pounded into flour. Camas

bulbs contributed to the survival of the members of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The Fragrant Garden

The Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoku*, or “forest bathing”, has a powerful healing and restorative effect on our emotional, physical and spiritual well-being (mind, body, soul). Right now, in our beautiful garden environment many fragrant blooming plants strongly appeal to our sense of smell. Throughout the garden the sweet scent of Mexican mock orange perfumes the air, especially nearby in the Phyllis Bentall Garden, where specimens of *Choisya ternata X dewitteana* “Aztec Pearl” and *Choisya ternata* (Sundance)=”Lich” are planted. Take a wander up the Rhododendron Path and the delicate fragrance of the scented azaleas will present itself. At the top of the Great Lawn in bed 74, the odour of sweet olive, *Osmanthus fragrans f. thunbergii*, assails the nostrils. Daphne, in the Thymelaeaceae family, grows throughout the garden. And just underneath the Princess tree across from the Meditation Garden, a delicious smelling dwarf Korean Lilac is in full bloom. Take a few moments to pause and breathe in these fragrances. You’ll feel better!

Don’t forget the first episode of “Monty Don’s French Gardens” will air on April 28. And on May 19, the first of his 2015 four episode series, “Secret History of the British Garden”, will air.

As always, your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome and gratefully appreciated. Please record them in the Information Binder or send them to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca. The “Weekly Update” is also available at <http://www.ericanotebook.com>

“Almost any garden, if you see it at just the right moment, can be confused with Paradise.”

Henry Mitchell (1924-1993), American garden writer and humanist

HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEK IN THE GARDEN!