

WEEKLY UPDATE - JUNE 11 - JUNE 18

“A bird in the boughs sang “June”
And “June” hummed a bee
In Bacchic glee
As he tumbled over and over
Drunk with the honey-dew...”

Clinton Scollard (1860-1932), “A June Harmony”

So much June poetry contains references to honeybees and songbirds; the former, as we know, are endangered and there aren't as many little chirpers and twitterers around this spring. But an osprey swooped down over Livingstone and perched in a Western redcedar. A few items to report.

1. Judy A. has requested that guides provide her with their volunteer hours from January through June, 2016 by June 30th at the latest. The VBGGA is trying to capture, as accurately as possible, the amount of time that volunteers contribute to the garden's programs. The yellow sheets are available in the Volunteer Lounge or electronically from your Captain.
2. **Umbrella TLC.** Thank you to Brian C. for repairing the trolley umbrella. He offers the following instructions to prevent another breakage. Holes have been drilled through the pole into which the pin can be placed to secure the umbrella. The pin can be most easily placed in the lowest hole and, with more effort, the second hole from the bottom. Placing the pin any higher places EXCESSIVE pressure on the frame and it will break on the weakest strut which happens to be the strut that has been broken many times. Once again it has been repaired and is back in service, but if it breaks again, the repair cost will likely be the replacement cost, somewhere between \$100.00 and \$150.00 or thereabouts.
3. Cart mysteries – another cart blanket has gone missing!
 - thank you to the individual who has provided rear view mirrors for all of the carts!
4. Thank you to Midge O. and Malcolm H. for the *liriodendron tulipifera* link. I would love to pass it along but my computer won't cooperate, so look for it next week.

Guide Goings On

1. Recently, at the 2016 City Service Awards the garden's gardeners were presented with an award for teamwork. These awards recognize excellence amongst the city public service and both the Mayor and the City Manager were present for the presentation.

Today (Thursday, June 9), to acknowledge their work and to celebrate the award, a small delegation of VDG guides consisting of Susan M., Midge O., Angela W., Brian C. and Erica D. (celebrating her birthday) presented them with a cake on behalf of the garden guides.

Garden Goings On

1. Medicine Wheel Ceremony
Sunday, June 19 - 12:00pm-3:00pm
A Celebration of the Summer Solstice

More about the White Garden

Our White Garden was first laid out in 1995 and planted originally with coloured flowers. Then, in 1998, Roy Forster visited the Chelsea Flower Show where Karl Lagerfeld's homage to Coco Chanel, a lavish garden containing only white flowers including hundreds of pure white camellias, her signature flower, was the hit of the show.

Roy's photos inspired our garden's White Garden; shortly after his return white flowers replaced the coloured flowers.

My thanks to Susan M. for providing this information.

Susan has also sent a website about cooking with the seeds of the monkey puzzle tree, its pine nuts or pinones. *Auracaria auracana*, or 'peheuen', in Chile is the country's national tree. Check out www.eatingchile.blogspot.ca/2009/03/eating-pinones.html for some interesting historical information, cooking techniques, recipes and Pablo Neruda poetry (in Spanish).

For Your Reading Pleasure

The Sunday, June 5 *NY Times* "Book Review" has posted a long list of books pertaining to gardens and gardening, published just in time for summer reading! Three that look particularly intriguing (to me) are *Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can Be a Source of Environmental Change* (Timber Press) by Larry Warner and Thomas Christopher who suggest that we base our gardening on "how plants and wildlife associate in a natural state."

Another, *What Have Plants Ever Done For Us: Western Civilization in Fifty Plants* (Bodleian Library/University of Chicago) by Stephen Harris, a curator of the Oxford University Herbaria, contains fascinating facts and lots of useful tidbits of information.

Finally, *What is a Garden?* (University of South Carolina) by W. S. Merwin, former poet laureate of the United States, focuses on the development of his lush forest

garden in Maui with its 850 species of palms along with monkeypods, jasmine, plumeria and other tropical plants, all overhung with Spanish moss. In his poetic style, he writes, "It is an enchantment, all of it, from the daydreaming to the digging."

June is the month of roses

"It was roses, roses, all the way..."

Robert Browning (1812-1889), "The Patriot"

All the way up the bark-mulched path between the Black Garden and Livingstone Lake, it is truly roses and more roses. While the roses in the Formal Rose Garden and the Heritage Rose Garden are spectacular at the moment, the old roses along the this quiet, shady walk, a little off the beaten track, are just as beautiful, although perhaps less showy, and the fragrance, in a nod to Shelly, is 'faint-worthy.'

At the junction where the paths to the Grotto and the Black Garden meet, the bi-colored pink and white petals of the semi-double, highly scented Apothecary's rose, *Rosa gallica* var. *officinalis*, mark the start of the trail. The buds, flowers and oval red hips once supplied ingredients for remedies dispensed by apothecaries throughout the Western world. An early blooming (and now finished) Scotch yellow rose, *Rosa x harisonii* 'Williams Double Yellow', sits at the base of a Sargent's crabapple tree, *Malus sargentii* 'Rosea', itself a member of the Rosaceae family.

By the medlar tree, *Mespilus germanica*, also in the Rosaceae family, a beautiful red Gallica rose, *Rosa* 'Charles de Mills', jostles a little with the gorgeous creamy pink large flowered climbing rose, *Rosa* 'Albertine', which grows up and over the branches of the Japanese pine, *Pinus thunbergii*, filling the air with its strong, rich fragrance. On the lake side of the path, the thorny stems of the tough little hybrid rugosa, *Rosa* 'F J Grootendorst' bend under its abundance of spicily scented clusters of violet-red pompoms.

The bluish tinged leaves of the redleaf rose *Rosa glauca*, which is already showing hips, provides a pleasing contrast to the another pretty Gallica rose, *Rosa* 'Complicata', whose fallen, delicate pink petals strew the path at this point. This single rose with its large boss of pink stamens resembles a wild rose. The pale pink flowers of a sweetly scented Alba rose, *Rosa* 'Great Maiden's Blush', droop on their stems while the long prickly stems of a massive Highdown rose, *Rosa moyesii* cv. *Highdownensis*. Later on, it will produce orange, urn-shaped decorative hips. This rose was introduced by Sir Frederick Stern in 1928 and named after his garden at Highdown which also contains plants collected by Reginald Farrer and EH Wilson, both pioneer botanists and plant hunters.

Across the path, a lovely cultivar of the eastern redbud, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy', is displaying its purple foliage.

Further along, under a towering Western redcedar, the vigorous rambling rose, *Rosa mulliganii*, the same variety that brought down the almond trees at the center of Vita Sackville-West's White Garden, lines the path for about twenty feet. Like the abundant redleaf rose, its flowers have turned to hips.

Even though it is not actually growing along this fragrant little back trail, one can't help but notice a giant Himalayan musk rose, *Rosa brunonii*, reaching high into the branches of the Ponderosa pine and bearing a remarkable similarity to a Kiftsgate climber and with a similar tea-scented fragrance.

Take some time to wander down this path "less travelled" and listen to the fountain splashing in the distance, breath in the perfumed air and enjoy a mini shinrin-yoku vacation. In only ten or fifteen minutes, the experience of this beautiful natural environment can have a powerful healing and restorative effect on your emotional, physical and spiritual well-being (mind, body, soul).

More notes on roses presently in bloom can be found in all of the June 2015 "Weekly Updates." Look in the archives at www.ericanotebook.com

Please send comments, contributions, corrections, questions etc. to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca

And, finally, a note about bees. On Sunday, July 17, from 1:30pm until 4:00pm, Brian Campbell is offering a class, "Know Your Bees of BC". Learn from a Master!

"The roses make the world so sweet,
The birds, the bees have such a tune,
There's such a light and such a heat
And such a joy in June..."

George Macdonald (1824-1905), "To -----"

HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEK IN THE GARDEN!