

WEEKLY UPDATE – MAY 21 – 28, 2016

**“May! Queen of blossoms,
And fulfilling flowers,
With what pretty music
Shall we charm the hours?”**

Lord Edward Thurlow (1781-1829), “May”

In spite of cooler temperatures this past week, Stage I sprinkling restrictions are being enforced two weeks earlier as the record breaking heat has melted the snow pack much more quickly than expected. A few reminders as we move along in the guiding season.

- 1. Please compile your Volunteer hours on the yellow sheets and hand in to Judy.**
- 2. Please remember to record your statistics.**
- 3. Please use DRY ERASE markers ONLY on the lounge white board and on the Plaza sign. Dry erase cleaner is available in the drawer under the white board in the lounge and on the trolley.**
- 4. The second tall chair is being repaired and should be back shortly.**
- 5. Radios - #1 and #4 radios were discovered in the trolley on Thursday!
Please return radios to their charging stands in the locked radio cabinet at the end of your shift. Also ensure that they are turned off and sitting securely in their charging cradle.**
 - # 6 has lost its label.**
 - John S. will test the radios on Sunday or Tuesday; they sometimes cut out and there is frequent interference.**
- 6. Please do not remove the cart clipboards from the trolley. The long one, for keeping track of prebooked tours, was found at the Information Desk on Thursday. The short one, which has the cart statistics forms, the cart standby forms and the policies/procedures for accommodating all those who wish to ride on the carts, was never found on Thursday. If you know where it is or if it shows up, please put it back on the trolley.**

Guide Goings On

- 1. Thursday, June 2 – Garden Walk with James P through the Southern Hemisphere Garden, the Eastern North America Garden and the Mediterranean Garden.**

2. **Thursday, June 9 - Guide Education – Rosemary P., Friday guide, will speak on “Learning From Stories: Plant Stories to Guide Your Guiding”. A tea for retired guides will take place afterward.**

Check out Steve Whysall’s Vancouver *Sun* blog (or his Facebook page) and follow his May tour through England’s West Country, Cornwall, the Scilly Isles and back to London for the Chelsea Flower Show. Liese G, Thursday guide, and Angela W, Friday guide, both on the tour, are having a wonderful time, exploring beautiful gardens and enjoying pub life. They are pictured in front of Stonehenge in his first post.

Also thanks to Malcolm H for drawing attention to the General Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Palm and Exotic Plant Society to be held on Monday, May 30 at 7:30 in the Cedar Room. The speaker will be Niall Wimsey of Cedar Rim Nursery; his topic is “ A brief history of garden design and the impact of plant hunters on the horticultural world, both past and present”. There is no admission charge and all are welcome.

Garden Goings On

1. **Bird Walk with Jeremy Gordon
Saturday, May 28
10:00am
Meet in the Atrium**
2. **Uncommon Annuals Plant Sale
Sunday, May 29
9:00am- 4:00pm
See the VDG/Bloedel Website for details**
3. **Desert Plant Society of Vancouver Show and Sale
Saturday, June 1 – 10:00am-7:00pm
Sunday, June 12 – 10:00am-3:30pm
Floral Hall
Admission by Donation**

Flowering plants are blooming so much earlier this spring. Last year I highlighted a number of flowering trees and shrubs and rather than writing about them again, I will let you know in which ‘back issue’ of the “Weekly Update” you can find the details.

1. **The Princess Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) – May 15 – 21
This lovely tree is on the May Self-Guided Tour**

2. The Laburnum Walk – May 16-28
3. The June Flower and California Lilac (*Ceanothus*) - May 29 – June 4
4. Peonies and the Black Locust (*Robinia psuedoacacia*) – June 5 – June 11
The beautiful black locust under which Mocha used to pause on our morning walks is glorious at the moment. Sadly, my portly chocolate lab passed away in March.

You can find hard copies in the Binder in the Volunteer Lounge; they will be forthcoming on www.ericanotebook.com

More Beautiful Flowering Plants -Tree Highlight – *Cornus kousa*

Also known as the Chinese dogwood, the Korean dogwood, the Japanese dogwood and the Japanese strawberry tree, the *Cornus kousa* dogwoods are in bloom throughout the lower Mainland. In VanDusen Garden, the showy pink flowering dogwood, *C. kousa* “Satomi”, eight of which form the pretty allee beside the Phyllis Bentall Pond, are just starting.

C. kousa differs from the Pacific dogwood, *C. nuttalli*, and the flowering dogwood, *C. florida*, in that it flowers about a month later.

The four pointed petals are really bracts surrounding small, inconspicuous greenish-yellow flowers.

The fruit is a compound berry; they are edible, being quite sweet and delicious, and can grow quite large. They are used for making wine; they also attract songbirds.

C. kousa has four season appeal. In the spring, its showy display attracts lots of attention. In the summer, the horizontal branching lends an attractive canopied and layered look. The bright red berries and leaves provide glowing autumn colour and in the winter, the exposed bark resembles a jigsaw puzzle.

C. kousa was the garden’s Tree of the Month in May, 2013. The hybrid “Miss Satomi” has earned the RHC Award of Garden Merit.

Shrub Highlight - Mountain laurel – *Kalmia latifolia*

A member of the Ericaceae family, *Kalmia* is also known as mountain laurel, spoonwood and calico-bush; it is native to eastern North America. Linnaeus named it after his friend and student, Pehr Kalm, a Swedish botanist who travelled in Canada and eastern North America and sent back samples in C18.

A broadleaf evergreen shrub, it is widely grown for its attractive foliage and flowers which range from deep pink to white. Although all parts of the plant are toxic, it attracts both birds and bees.

The Cherokee made an infusion out of leaves; this was used as a topical analgesic, as an ointment for cuts and scrapes and as a soothing balm.

It is called spoonwood because Dutch settlers reported to Kalm that the native Americans carved utensils out of the wood.

It is the state flower of Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Many *K. latifolia* cultivars are evident throughout the garden. The cultivar 'Pink Charm' in bed 10 in the Eastern North America Garden and bed 30 in the Cypress area has earned the RHS Award of Garden Merit. It has dark red flower buds which open to a rich pink.

Does Vancouver need an official tree? If so, what should it be? The Parks Board is conducting a survey.

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

**"The true meaning of life is to plant trees
under whose shade you do not expect to sit."
Nelson Henderson, second generation Manitoba farmer**

LOCAL STRAWBERIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

ENJOY THE LONG WEEKEND AND HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEK OF GUIDING!!