

Weekly Update

October 2nd – 8th 2015

- 1. October 8th Guide Meeting 10 am** will feature Christine A's "Successful Marriages: the House and Garden in Vancouver".
2. Any guides who missed the **Association's bulb sale** can still plan a colorful display by contacting Brian C. and purchasing from remaining stock, temporarily stored in Brian's garage.
3. During the gardener's walk Bruce identified wind damaged trees that have been removed and others still to be removed. The large maple at 37th Avenue has gone, leaving a light filled planting area near the garden sign on Oak Street.
4. Have you been on **the Nectar Trail**? A large bee house with an interpretive sign has been erected on the greenway at Oak Meadow Park across Oak Street. The trail connects our garden with Queen Elizabeth Park and is designed to provide suitable habitat for native pollinators. Visitors to our garden often want to visit Bloedel and might enjoy the 37th Ave greenway walk.
5. Anyone visiting places like our Garden, or Lighthouse Park will notice the poor health of ***Arbutus menziesii*** trees. Dieback in the crown, dead stems and gnarled cankers along the trunk and branches provide evidence of the species decline. There are multiple causes, thought to include climate, human impacts, and disease. The **fungus *Neofusicoccum arbuti*** is an example of a pathogen that can live within a host that appears perfectly healthy. When the host becomes stressed, the pathogen expresses itself, causing deadly cankers on the main trunk and branches of the tree. The cankers produce sooty black spores. As the cankers increase in frequency and size, they begin to girdle the stem, shutting off water and nutrient transport. This leads to dieback in the crown, decreasing the ability of the tree to repair and regenerate. UBC Department of Forest and Conservation is studying the biology of the fungus and in particular to find out if additional plants and trees could act as a reservoir for this pathogen and what effect human disturbance had on the prevalence of the disease. Six new hosts of this fungus have been identified. The new hosts span 4 taxonomic orders and include Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), English Ivy (*Ilex aquifolium*), a species of rose (*Rosa sp*), Sitka mountain-ash (*Sorbus sitchensis*) and hardhack (*Spiraea douglasii*). Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) was confirmed as a host. Research continues but the best option to help these iconic trees survive is to reduce the stress they may be experiencing. Rob Roy McGregor received the 'best undergraduate thesis award' for his work on arbutus. Extracted from "A hidden threat to the iconic arbutus," UBC Forestry "Branchlines," Vol. 26 #2 Summer 2015.