

## WEEKLY UPDATE – APRIL 2 – APRIL 9, 2017

“The wild and windy March once more  
Has shut his gates of sleet,  
And gives us back the April time  
So fickle and so sweet...”  
Alice Cary (1820-1871), “April”

Welcome to the new guiding season at the garden! After a brutal winter, spring has officially arrived, although it seems more like November as far as temperature and precipitation are concerned. In contrast to last year’s precocious and exuberant outburst of bloom, this year blossoms and buds are emerging much later and more tentatively, as if reluctant to expose themselves in such wet and chilly conditions. Even though snowdrops are still abundant, there are some reassuring signs: bright yellow daffodils and forsythia, early camellias and many shades of pink magnolias, grape hyacinths and cherry and plum blossom. Last year at this time, most of the aforementioned were in full bloom or almost finished. To help us launch the season, here are some timely reminders.

### **At the beginning of your shift:**

Check that the guide at the trolley has the radio turned on to Channel 21. In case of an emergency on a tour, he/she will go to the Cashier’s desk and have her call 911. The guide must know the nearest gate to which to direct Emergency Services. Emergency procedures, radio information and Gate Information are in the Guide Binder.

### **During the guiding shift:**

Please greet visitors as they enter the garden via the plaza.

Please try to avoid clustering around the trolley. If there is an abundance of guides, perhaps they can rove in the garden or do research.

Be on the alert to start more tours as needed throughout the afternoon rather than turn visitors away or make them wait.

Please take a radio with you into the garden and turn it to high volume.

Please communicate using the radios to ensure that tours are within the agreed upon duration so as not to hold up a group who may be waiting.

Report all accidents involving visitors and/or volunteers whether or not a name is provided. Accident report forms and a First Aid Kit are available at the cashier’s desk.

Ensure that the radio cupboard is locked every time you leave the Volunteer Lounge. If there are guides in the Lounge, agree on who will check/lock the cupboard.

### **At the end of the shift:**

If driving a cart, please TURN OFF THE DEAD SWITCHES.

Please CLOSE THE UMBRELLA before returning the trolley to the Volunteer Lounge.

Please ensure that the radios have been turned OFF and are securely placed in the correct charging stands in the radio cupboard.

Please ensure that you fill out the appropriate statistics, walking or driving, for your shift.

Please return the Guide Cupboard Key to the Guide Drawer at the Information Services desk.

Please remember to fill out the yellow Record of Volunteer Hours sheets (available in the wire basket on the shelf) for the VBGA statistical compilation.

Cart Drivers: PLEASE REVIEW cart use procedures, new information and new proposals re the driver's checklist and keeping track of potential riders. As always, priority goes to the mobility impaired.

Two new IKEA folding chairs to be used at the trolley have been purchased. They are in the Volunteer Lounge at present. Because they are new and a little stiff, the seats need to be pushed down firmly until you hear the click.

### **Guide Goings On**

Although our official season has just started, the garden guides have been busy. Unfortunately, the February Education meeting had to be cancelled due to illness and inclement weather; in March, however, Samantha S, the garden's Plant Documentation Technician, gave an excellent presentation on Night Blooming Plants.

Also in March, guides got a first hand view of damage to the garden after our severe winter and the plans for renewal, refurbishment etc. from James W, our Head Gardener.

Congratulations to Judith P who succeeds Jennifer B as the Saturday Driving Captain. And congratulations also to Betty McD who is now the Wednesday PM Driving Captain after holding this position in an acting capacity for the past 2 years.

We owe much gratitude to Claire K, our outgoing GLT Chair. Please read the Tribute to her in the most recent issue of the *Gazette* so you can get a better sense of Claire's involvement in garden affairs and understand the depth of her commitment to and passion for the garden and the work that is undertaken here.

Welcome to Angela W who takes over as the GLT Chair and to Alison H and Lyn A, GLT Vice Chairs.

The new editor of the *Gazette*, Malcolm H, has sent out the first issue. Thank you to Liese G and Angela W for their hard work on the Gazette for the past 3 years.

Malcolm will also be producing the "Weekly Update" in May and August during my absences.

1. Thursday, April 6 – the Gardener's Walk will be led by James P who is responsible for the Eastern North American, Southern Hemisphere and Mediterranean Gardens.
2. Thursday, April 13 – Guide Education/Business meeting. The speaker will be Dr. Peter Candido; his topic is "Dinosaurs in my Garden? Birds and Birding in Vancouver".

### **Garden Goings On**

1. Saturday and Sunday, April 8 and 9 – Sakura Days Japan Fair, part of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival.

We have lots of blossoms this year! To celebrate the event,  
please enjoy this lovely haiku.

Silent cherry bloom...  
again with your  
old eloquence  
address my inner ear.  
Onitsura (1661-1738)

2. Vancouver Dahlia Society Tuber Sale  
Saturday, April 8 - 10:00am – 4:30pm  
Floral Hall – by donation
3. BC Plein Air Artists' Exhibition  
Thursday, April 6 – Sunday, April 23  
Discovery Room – Visitor Center

### **Garden Clippings**

1. Springtime is Plant Sale time. Check out Steve Whysall's "In the Garden" column in the April 1 edition of the *Vancouver Sun* for a comprehensive listing of all the Lower Mainland plant sales in April and May, including the largest one, the VanDusen Garden Plant Sale, on April 30.
2. General Mills is once again promoting its Bring Back the Bees Campaign to raise awareness of the fragility of North American bee populations and their potential disappearance due to disease, pesticide use, flowerless landscapes and monolithic crop planting. Last year, Vesey Seeds in PEI gave away an astonishing number of seeds, over 90,000,000, to encourage the planting of bee-enticing wildflowers.

This year, however, there has been a backlash as the campaign may have introduced invasive plants into some areas.

To promote more bee awareness in our community, VanDusen is offering 2 workshops, both instructed by Brian Campbell, Master Beekeeper.

- a. Helping Bees in Your Urban Garden on June 17.
- b. Know Your Bees of BC on July 29.

### **Signs of Spring: Buttercup Winterhazel**

One of the prettiest flowering shrubs, presently visible in neighbourhood gardens as well as in VanDusen Garden, is *Corylopsis pauciflora*, also known as buttercup winter hazel (sometimes called buttercup witch hazel). It is closely related to and in the same family as witch hazel, Hamamelidaceae.

Native to Japan and Taiwan, it exhibits nodding racemes of small, usually bell-shaped flowers, which, in contrast to the vivid yellow of forsythia, are a more subtle pale yellow and fragrant.

After the flower bloom, the changing colour of its foliage provides year-round interest.

It has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Look for it in beautiful bloom in beds 121D, 122, 123 and 128 in the Sino-Himalayan Garden.

Please make use of the “Guide Questions, Comments or Suggestions sheet in the Binder. Your feedback and contributions are most welcome and much appreciated for the “Weekly Update”. Of particular value are comments made by visitors or things that you notice in the garden that would be of interest to guides and/or visitors. We will try to answer, acknowledge, summarize and get back to you within the week *via* the next “Weekly Update”. You may send comments, etc. to [pkbuchanan@shaw.ca](mailto:pkbuchanan@shaw.ca). Please note that the monthly Gardeners’ Walks, Tree of the Month, the Self-Guided Tours and the “WU” all have links on the Erica’s Notebook Website at <http://www.ericanotebook.com>.

Many thanks to Marilyn Gl, the webmistress extraordinaire, for her work on this undertaking.

“This outward spring and garden are a reflection of the inward garden.”  
Rumi, C13 Persian poet (1207-1273)

Have a great opening week of guiding in this “Capricious month of laughter and of tears,/ Inconstant April...”