

WEEKLY UPDATE - APRIL 16 - 23, 2016

“There are no days in the whole year round more delicious than those which often come in the latter days of April...The sun trembles in its own soft rays...The grass in the meadow seems all to have grown green since yesterday...though there is warmth enough for a sense of luxury, there is coolness enough for exertion.”

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *April Days*, 1861

The first week of guiding seems to have gone smoothly and there is little to report.

- 1. Cart Drivers: Cart shadowing begins on Sunday and carries on throughout the week.
: Please note the reminder from James about the leaning laburnum tree. It has been marked but drive carefully.
: Please keep the Cart Booking clipboard on the trolley.
: Where are all the cart blankets?**
- 2. Tourism Challenge books are available at the Information Desk.**
- 3. The trolley now has its plastic cover and the umbrella will not blow away! Please remember to close the umbrella before taking it back inside. And, once more, kudos to Brian for the trolley reconditioning!**

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. THE PLANT SALE,
Sunday, April 24 - 10:00am-4:00pm
The Great Lawn**

EARTH DAY

Friday, April 22, is the 46th Earth Day celebration. It was founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson and first organized in 1970 to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet as well as to encourage awareness of the growing problems of air, water and soil pollution.

The slogan on the very first Earth Day poster was “We have met the enemy and he is us”; the poster was created by American cartoonist, Walt Kelly, and shows Pogo the possum holding a litter pick-up stick and a burlap bag as he sets out to tackle all the garbage left behind by careless humans in his beloved Okefenokee Swamp.

This year, political leaders from around the world will gather in New York City to sign the Paris Climate Agreement. As part of the global commitment to plant a tree for every person in the world by 2020, Canada will help grow the global forest by planting 25,000 legacy trees as the first step to achieving the goal of planting 35,000 million trees, one for every person in Canada, by 2020. This means planting 25,000 trees a day!

In Vancouver, the Earth Day Celebration, March and Festivities will be held on Sunday, April 24 at 1:00pm beginning with a parade that starts at Commercial and Broadway and proceeds to Grandview Park for the performances.

April 19 is Primrose Day

The primrose was the favourite flower of Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of Britain from February, 1868 to December, 1868 and again from 1874 until 1880. Queen Victoria would send him vast quantities on his birthday and after his death on April 19, 1881, Primrose Day was inaugurated. In 1883, Lady Randolph Churchill founded the Primrose League to spread Conservative principles in Great Britain (it was disbanded in 2004).

“Underneath the spreading chestnut tree...”

**“O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?...”
William Butler Yeats (1865 -1939),
“Among Schoolchildren”**

In my garden a bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophylla*) grows next to a horse chestnut tree (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). The pendulous yellowy-green racemes of the former are a sharp contrast to the upright creamy panicles of the latter. Both trees produce far too many leaves for fall raking but in the early spring they are lovely.

The true chestnut (*Castanea*) is a deciduous tree in the Fagaceae family which also contains the beeches. There are four main branches and all four are represented in the garden. *C. dentata*, the American chestnut can be found in bed 13A; *C. mollissima*, the Chinese chestnut, is in bed 127A; *C. cuspidata*, the Japanese chinquapin, is in bed 128; and *C. sativa*, the European type, also known as Spanish or sweet chestnut, can be found in bed 32T. All produce edible nuts which can be eaten cooked or roasted, ground into flour, used as a puree or thickener or fermented, as is done in Portugal, where a chestnut liquor is very popular.

There is a beautiful *C. sativa* near the tennis courts at Kitsilano Beach under which Mocha used to pause when he was still able to hobble up and down the hill. In the fall, usually early in the morning, people harvest the tree's fallen chestnuts.

Castanea, however, is not to be confused with the common horse chestnut or buckeye (*Aesculus*) in the Sapindaceae family. Its glossy, nut-brown seeds, called conkers, have a whitish scar at their base and are slightly poisonous if eaten.

There are a dozen or so buckeyes in the garden with the largest representation, the Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*) in beds 107B and 107D. Ohio is known as the Buckeye State after the Ohio buckeye which is the state tree.

A famous horse chestnut tree stood in front of the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam and was mentioned in her diary. I was fortunate to see it in July, 2009; sadly, it blew down in a windstorm in August, 2010.

Television Highlight

For those who missed it in the spring of 2014, Knowledge Network is once again showing "Monty Don's French Gardens". The first episode of three in the series airs on Thursday, April 28 at 8:00pm.

Buzz the Bee Campaign Update: as of Thursday, April 14, 115,000,000 million wildflower seeds have been given away.

Please send comments, suggestions, questions etc. to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca or record them in the Information Binder. The "Weekly Update" is also available at <http://www.ericanotebook.com>

"Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a singing bird will come."
Chinese proverb

HAVE A GREAT DAY!

