

WEEKLY UPDATE – APRIL 23 – 30, 2017

“I love the season well
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,
Nor dark and many folded clouds foretell
The coming on of storms...”
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), “An April Day”

Finally!! Some of us experienced some welcome sunshine during our guiding shifts this past week. At this time last year, the garden was bursting with bloom, especially the dogwoods! We have much to anticipate in the coming weeks.

1. The Tourism Challenge Books are now available at the Information Services Desk between 10:00am and 4:00pm.
2. Cart drivers are reminded to be particularly vigilant with regard to keeping a close eye on the charging level. Please monitor it closely before and after each tour. If it drops to 50% or less, please return the cart to the charging station. Also, please record noticeable drops in the charge along with the number of tours taken in the Master Cart and Driver Log.
3. The new *Gazette* should be in your mailboxes. Have a look at it for the first installment of the history of cart tours in the garden, written by Susan M., the VDG Archivist; as well, Malcolm H. has provided some flowering cherry tree notes and his intriguing and challenging *Gazette* Question!

Guide Goings On

1. Thursday, May 4 – Gardener’s Walk – Casey W. will take us through the Sino-Himalayan Garden

Garden Goings On

1. VBGA Volunteer Recognition and Annual Meeting
Monday, April 24
Great Hall in the Visitor Center
2. Mainly Vancouver – Work by Michael Kluckner
His first local exhibition in 11 years on display until May 28!
Saturday, April 29 – Opening Reception – 2:30pm – 5:30pm
Discovery Room
3. **IT’S HERE! THE PLANT SALE!**
Sunday, April 30 – 10:00am-4:00pm
The Great Lawn
4. Vancouver Bird Week Walk with Richard Wing (such a perfect name)
Saturday, May 6 – 10:00am
Limited to 25 participants.
This walk helps launch Vancouver Bird Week which runs from May 6 -13.

This year's theme is "Birds of the Shore"

For more information about Bird Week activities in the garden and elsewhere, check out the VDG website.

5. Vancouver African Violet and Gesneriad Society Show and Sale
Saturday, May 6 – 1:00pm-4:00pm
Floral Hall
Admission by donation

Garden Clippings

1. Further to the article on Skunk Cabbage, Marilyn G. sent along a website reference for those who might wish to know more about the heat-generating properties of the eastern skunk cabbage. Go to <http://northernwoodlands.org/outside-story/article/skunk-cabbage>

Terry H. (Thursday guide), notes that *Arum italicum* also uses heat to initiate pollination, a phenomenon observed by Lamarck in 1778. *A. italicum* can be found in beds 13A and B, and 15A, all in the Winter Walk; bed 26B in the Woodland Garden; bed 38C in the Phyllis Bentall Garden; and beds 46D, 48A and 73, along the Rhododendron Path.

2. The pretty pinky-leafed maples are leafing out, one on the Rhododendron Walk and one up by the Waterfall (bed 121C).
3. While we wait for the garden to burst into its spectacular May bloom, the Eastern North America Garden provides a quietly stunning place to take visitors to see the emergence of some of the spring woodland understory plants: Solomon's Seal, mayapple, lungwort, trout lilies and the trilliums, to name a few. For a summary of what is on display now in the ENA and what will be, please refer to the most recent Gardener's Walk write-up in the *Gazette*.
4. In the "WU" archives – lily of the valley and Solomon's Seal – May 1-7, 2015
5. Spotted in the garden – the barred owl in the vicinity of the Dove tree.

More on Trilliums - *Trillium grandiflorum*

Also known as white trillium, great white trillium, large-flowered trillium and white wakerobin, *Trillium grandiflorum* is native to Eastern North America extending as far west as Minnesota. However, they also grow vigorously on Vancouver Island.

Its preferred habitat is in the rich soil of mixed upland forests and it likes sunlight. As a spring ephemeral, its life cycle is synchronized with that of the deciduous woodland growth.

Growing on rhizomes, a single rootstalk will often form large clonal colonies (similar to trembling aspens – see "WU" Sept. 17-24, 2016). *T. grandiflorum* generally flowers from late April to early June after *T. erectum* (Stinking Benjamin) flowers. It takes a long time to grow and up to 7 years to flower in the wild, but it is extremely long-lived, sometimes up to 35 years.

One form may open with light pink flowers, while the white flower of the common form turns progressively pinker as it ages.

Pollination is accomplished by honeybees, bumblebees and wasps. Its seeds are dispersed by ants and mice; however, in deciduous forests, *T. grandiflorum* is a favourite food of white-tailed deer and the ingestion and defecation of the seeds aid in seed dispersal as well.

T. grandiflorum is the provincial emblem of Ontario. While it is not illegal to pick trilliums, except, perhaps, on Crown land, it is generally discouraged because of the length of time they take to grow. It is also the state wildflower of Ohio.

In a modern language of flowers, trillium signifies modest ambition and beauty.

It has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Our garden has many examples of *Trillium grandiflorum*. Look for it northeast of the Cypress pond in bed 27 where there is a lovely display right now, along the Autumn Stroll in bed 28,, in the White Garden in bed 39 and in the Canadian Heritage Garden in beds 117, 137C and D.

The PCR (July, 2016) also lists an example of *T. grandiflorum* 'Flore Pieno', a double flowered white trillium in bed 27.

Please send any comments, questions or suggestions to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca or record them in the Guide Information Binder. And be sure to check out www.ericanotebook.com for general garden information as well as links to the "Tree of the Month", the monthly Gardener's Walk, Self-Guided tours and the "Weekly Update".

Let's all hope for warmer, drier weather! Have a great week of guiding.

"At last young April, ever frail and fair,
Wooed by her playmate with the golden hair,
Chased to the margin of receding floods
O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds
In tears and blushes sighs herself away
And hides her cheeks beneath the flowers of May."
Oliver Wendell Holmes (1845- 1935), "Young April"