

WEEKLY UPDATE – JULY 16 – 23, 2017

“My emblem is the Lion, and I breathe
The breath of Libyan deserts o’er the land;
My sickle as a sabre I unsheathe,
And bent before me the pale harvests stand.
The lakes and rivers shrink at my command,
And there is thirst and fever in the air;
The sky is changed to brass, the earth to sand;
I am the Emperor whose name I bear.”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), *The Poet’s Calendar*

Here on the sunny south coast, we continue to enjoy warm ocean breezes, fairly moderate temperatures and even some precipitation. However, July’s hot breath has scorched the Cariboo and the Chilcotin leaving devastation, destruction and profound sadness in its wake. There is very little to report this week.

1. Thanks to Linda M. and Marilyn G. for pointing out the usefulness of Vandusen Garden’s Twitterfeed for almost up-to-the-minute information about plants and events in the garden. It identifies plants of interest and those in bloom and beautiful photographs as well. A great resource for guides!
2. Seen/heard etc. this past week – rain unexpectedly pounded the garden on Thursday morning and the delphiniums took a beating.
 - the rain released the fragrance of the katsura trees in the Stone Garden.
 - the sunflowers have been planted along the watercourse in the Alma VanDusen Meadow Garden. Miguel has been working hard in this area and it is looking great!
 - a beautiful Angel’s trumpet (*Brugmansia*) is in bloom on the peninsula near the Gunnera.
3. Marilyn G. has posted last week’s Gardener’s Walk notes on www.ericanotebook.com

Guide Goings On

1. Thursday, August 3 - Gardener’s Walk with Thomas Equizabel through the Rose Gardens, Phyllis Bentall Garden and the alpine plants.

Garden Goings On

1. ZimCarving with Patrick Sephani and visiting artist Peter Kanaji
Until September 30 in the Discovery Room and in the Garden

2. Works by Anna Milton
Until September 27 in the Library
3. BC Fuchsia and Begonia Society – Annual Sale and Competition
Saturday, July 29 and Sunday, July 30 – 10:00am – 4:00pm
Floral Hall and Cedar Room
Admission - \$3.00

Garden Clippings

1. In the “Weekly Update” archives for 2015
July 24-30 – lindens, trumpet vine, angel’s trumpet

In the “Weekly Update” archives for 2016
July 23-30 - prickly pear, black spruce, black mulberry, hardy ginger
2. VanDusen’s resident ravens were rattling up in the tall conifers last week. New research that suggests that ravens are at least as intelligent as apes and 4 year old children; they are able to solve complex problems using self-control and reasoning; they use tools and plan for the future. These findings are challenging assumptions about animals’ ability to reason and may be threatening to those who believe that cognition is a uniquely human attribute. Check out the most recent edition of the journal *Science* for more detail.
3. Thursday guide Marie B. has been exploring Vancouver Island. You can read about her experiences and impressions in the *Vancouver Sun’s* Travel section, Saturday, July 15.
4. Midge O. has written a lovely tribute to Grace McCarthy, pointing out her role in the creation of VanDusen Garden. You can read this in the Globe British Columbia section of the *Globe and Mail*, Saturday, July 15.

A Tale of Two Cedars (One of Which is ‘True’)

“Behold, I will liken you to a cedar in Lebanon, with fair
branches and forest shade.”
Ezekiel, 31: 3

As mentioned in a previous item in the “Weekly Update”, the presence of many examples of ‘true’ cedars, including a large cedar of Lebanon, as well as a stately Western redcedar in the Mediterranean Garden provides an excellent opportunity to point out some of the similarities and differences between these two majestic trees.

Although both are evergreen conifers, the Western redcedar, *Thuja plicata* is a member of the Cupressaceae family while the cedar of Lebanon, *Cedrus libani*, a 'true' cedar, belongs to the Pinaceae family. The 'leaves' of the Western redcedar are scale-like, lying in opposite pairs and overlapping like shingles in flat, fan-like sprays. They exude a powerful aroma making them a significant component of the forest bathing experience. The 'leaves' of the cedar of Lebanon, on the other hand, are needle-like and spaced apart on long shoots and in clusters on short shoots. The egg-shaped cones of our cedar are bent backward along the branches and shed pollen in the spring. Seed cones on the cedar of Lebanon are produced every two years and take twelve months to mature.

The Western redcedar is found mostly in the Pacific Northwest at low to mid elevations in temperate zones. It is very happy at sea level whereas the cedar of Lebanon is a tree of the Mediterranean area and grows at mid to high elevations, up to 7,000 feet. Our cedar is ubiquitous; the cedar of Lebanon, however, is vulnerable. Active programs to conserve and regenerate forests in Lebanon and Turkey are providing a measure of protection.

Both are large trees with the Western redcedar growing up to 60m and the cedar of Lebanon up to 40m; furthermore, both can live up to 1,000 years.

Both also share a number of mythic, cultural and economic similarities. In Pacific Northwest First Nations myth, the cedar was created by the Great Spirit to honour a man who was always helping others. The power of the tree is so strong that it is said that if you stand with your back to it, you can receive some of its strength. It is the Tree of Life. Similarly, in the epic of Gilgamesh, the cedar groves of Lebanon are identified as the dwelling place of the gods and in the book of Isaiah, it is referred to as the Pride of the World, one of 75 references to the tree in the Bible.

Since 1988, the Western redcedar has been BC's provincial tree and it was also the former VanDusen Garden logo. The cedar of Lebanon is on the flag of Lebanon and is the symbol of the Cedar revolution.

In the past, in their respective habitats, the wood of both trees was used for building. The First Nations people used it for canoes, longhouses, totem poles, boxes, bowls, paddles and carvings. It contains thujaplicin, a natural fungicide that prevents wood from rotting and structures can remain sound for over a hundred years. Western redcedar continues to be used as roofing material, for house siding, decks and fencing, as interior paneling, for lining closets, making cedar chests, guitar sound boards and even beehives! Cedar of Lebanon wood was used to construct the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem and the palaces of King David as well as the great ships of the ancient Phoenicians. The wood contains natural oils that repel moths and extracts of resin show that it contains antimicrobial properties.

Both trees share some medicinal properties as well. For example, First Nations people chewed the leaf buds as a cure for toothache and the boiled bark buds of the

Western redcedar were used to treat coughs. The resin of the cedar of Lebanon was used in mummification while the bark was used by ancient Hebrews in a cleansing ceremony after leprosy outbreaks.

More information about these splendid trees can be found on the Tree of the Month link on www.ericanotebook.com, the Western redcedar in February, 2011, and the Cedar of Lebanon in August, 2015.

Please send comments, questions, suggestions, corrections etc. to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca and remember the other great resources available to guides such as www.ericanotebook.com and the Yosef Wosk Library.

More hot, dry weather is in store, so stay hydrated and protected from the sun!
Have a great week of guiding!

“Hot July thereafter rages
Dog-star smitten, wild with heat;
Fierce as pard the hunter cages
Hot July thereafter rages...”
Henry Austin Dobson, (1840-1921), *The Masque of Months*