

## WEEKLY UPDATE – JULY 2 –JULY 9, 2016

“It’s a smile, it’s a kiss,  
It’s a sip of wine, it’s summertime,  
Sweet summertime.”  
Kenny Chesney (1968-present), American country  
Music singer/songwriter, “Summertime”

Summer is back!! There is very little to report (as of Tuesday, June 28).

1. The battery of #4 radio appears to be close to its expiry date as it does not hold a charge for very long. The #4 charger is fine. Thanks to John S. for testing both radio and charger.

### GUIDE GOINGS ON

1. Thursday, July 7 – Gardener’s Walk with Casey W. through the Sino-Himalayan Garden.
2. **SAVE THE DATE** – Guide Education - Thursday, September 8  
The speaker will be Alan Garr, VanDusen's volunteer bee keeper on bees, of course, and with a focus on the garden.

“Bees do have a smell, you know, and if they don’t they should,  
for their feet are dusted with the spices of a million flowers.”  
Ray Bradbury (1920-2012), *Dandelion Wine*

### GARDEN GOINGS ON

1. Vancouver Shade Garden Society Annual Show  
Sunday, July 17 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Floral Hall  
Free

### GARDEN CLIPPINGS

1. The mountain ash berries are turning red as are the berries on some of the hollies!
2. **Correction.** Last week I incorrectly identified the location of the red oak Vancouver PoetTree. It is in Alexandra Park, not Alexander.

## Plant Highlight - Japanese Summersweet – *Clethra barbinervis*

At the top of the Great Lawn, a little behind the sculpture ‘Observing Our Society’ you can find a lovely example of Japanese summersweet,, *Clethra barbinervis*. The name of the genus comes from the Greek ‘klethra’ which means ‘alder’ as the leaves of Japanese summersweet resemble those of the alder.

This small tree has four-season appeal. Its sharply serrated leaves are an attractive deep green colour. Its summer bloom consists of long horizontal or drooping racemes of lightly scented white flowers which attract bees and butterflies. In the fall, the foliage shows good colour ranging from yellow to red to burgundy on some specimens in the eastern US. Furthermore, the flower spikes give way to dark brown spikes of seed capsules. And in the winter, its bark is shown to best advantage; the cinnamon coloured outer bark peels off to show smooth patches of tan and grey.

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University has a striking specimen of *C. barbinervis* which is almost 130 years old. It stands over 20 feet tall and is nearly 15 feet wide.

E H Wilson, renowned plant hunter, collector for the Arnold Arboretum and eventually its Keeper, regarded *C. barbinervis* to be the finest ornamental plant in the genus. It has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

In our garden, look in beds 85A and 86 for examples of Japanese summersweet.

The eastern North American native species, *Clethra alnifolia*, or sweet pepperbush, is smaller and more of a shrub. There is lots of it in bed 177 in the Canadian Heritage Garden. Specimens of two pretty cultivars, ‘Pink Spire’ and ‘Ruby Spice’ can be seen in various places around the garden, including the Eastern North America Garden (107D), the Phyllis Bentall Garden (36B, 36C, 38C) and the Mediterranean Garden (33A). Check the Plant Collection Records for specific locations.

“Rest is not idleness, and to lie on the grass under trees on a hot summer’s day, listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.”

Sir John Lubbock (1834-1913), *The Use of Life*

In my case, lying on the beach with my summer reading is another restful use of life of which, I am sure, Lubbock would approve. I am off to the Kootenays for five weeks to do just that along with kayaking, being with family and friends and, hopefully, with no forest fires this year.

I am grateful to Malcolm H. who will assume the responsibility for the “Weekly Update” in my absence.

Please check out [www.ericanotebook.com](http://www.ericanotebook.com) for recent updates to this terrific website and send any comments, suggestions for future “Weekly Update” topics, questions etc. to [pkbuchana@shaw.ca](mailto:pkbuchana@shaw.ca)

**Enjoy the month of July, make sure you have your hats, water and sunscreen handy in case the heat keeps up and have a great month of guiding!**

And a few words to live by right now!

“Summer afternoon – summer afternoon; to me, those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.”

Henry James (quoted by Edith Wharton in *A Backward Glance*, 1934)