

WEEKLY UPDATE #18 July 30 - August 6, 2016

At the end of July, some parts of the Garden are spectacular.

The South African end of the Southern Hemisphere Garden is a blaze of yellows, reds, blues and pinks.

At the tip of the Argentina/Chile peninsular, *Passiflora caerulea*, a blue passion flower vine, is giving some magnificent multi-coloured blooms, with many buds still to open.

The Phyllis Bentall Garden is near its best, with a succession of tall, fragrant lilies, a pink pepperbush, and clusters of yellow flowered pineapple lilies.

In the Alma VanDusen Garden the bright red amaranth and bronze castor bean plants have grown remarkably in the last week.

Near the waterfall, the *Campsis grandiflora*, Chinese Trumpet Creeper, in the tall Ginkgo, uphill of the weeping Ginkgo, has clusters of upright orange to red bell flowers.

The floral highpoint of VanDusen this week is the mass of puffy clouds of pink flowers on the Silk Tree, *Albizia julibrisin* 'Red Silk'. It is above the waterfall and can be seen across the width of the Stone Garden.

GUIDE GOINGS ON

1. There are no Guide meetings during July and August.
2. **Thursday August 4th, 10 am, Visitor Centre Plaza**
Garden Walk with Miguel Molina in the Canadian Heritage, Vegetable and Alma VanDusen gardens.

GARDEN GOINGS ON

Friday July 29th to Monday August 1st, 10 am–8 pm

9th Annual Sculptors' Society of BC Show

See modern sculpture from the bizarre to the exquisite - with bronze, stone, hybrid animal/human droids, interactive automata, whimsical ceramic and classical busts.

Meet the Sculptors and watch daily live sculpting demonstrations.

Friday August 5th to Wednesday August 31st, Discovery Room, during Garden hours

Flora: An exhibition of several series of paintings. Each series was a response to the joy that the artist Jan Henry found in the colours and textures of flowers.

For Children - Interactive paint project Sunday, August 21st, 1–4 pm with the exhibition artist Jan Henry.

MYSTERY PLANT 1

On the Plaza, in two tall black planters near the doors, there are climbing green vines with multi-lobed leaves and bright yellow flowers. They are *Tropaeolum peregrinum*, commonly called the Canary Creeper, Canary Bird Vine or Canary Bird Flower. The plant, a trailing Nasturtium, establishes vines of 8 to 12 feet in length. The bright yellow petals resemble a canary's wings; hence the name, Canary Creeper. At least two websites state unequivocally that the name is due to the plant originating in the Canary Islands. This is not true. The plant is from South America, native to Peru and Ecuador. Most websites, including the Royal Horticultural Society, state this. The Canary Islands are named after the giant dogs once reputed to live there (Dr Who fans may recall that his robot dog was K9). Canaries are native to the islands and the plant resembles them. The Canary Creeper, then, is a plant named after birds, named after dogs.

http://www.rainyside.com/plant_gallery/vines/Tropaeolum_peregrinum.html

MYSTERY PLANT 2

On each side of the path facing the Black Garden laburnum, are several small succulents whose rosettes of green leaves have pink edges. They are probably aeoniums, most likely *Aeonium colorata*. <https://www.tumblr.com/search/aeonium%20colorata> Aeoniums are mainly from the Canary Islands. 'Aeonium' is from the ancient Greek word for 'ageless'.

SIR JAMES EDWARD SMITH REVISITED

In Weekly Update #17 July 23rd - July 30, 2016, Sir James Edward Smith, 1759-1828, had a walk-on role in the original naming of the Hardy Ginger *Cautlea spicata*. It was noted that the Himalayan spruce, *Picea smithiana*, is named for him and that three are in VanDusen. One is the huge tree at the top of the Rhododendron Walk, opposite the Japanese Larch. Another is near to the bee hives, on the side opposite the shed. As well as his amazing wife, it is worth noting the role of luck in him acquiring the Linnean Collections. When Linneaus's son died in 1783, his mother offered the Collections to Sir Joseph Banks. He could not buy them, but his 24-year-old friend Smith persuaded his father, James Smith, to supply the £1000 required. The ship had just sailed when King Gustav II of Sweden returned. It is said that he sent a vessel to stop the ship, but was too late. This is untrue, but Swedes believed that if the King had been home, the collections would have stayed in Sweden. <http://www.joseph-banks.org.uk/members/research-papers/joseph-banks-james-edward-smith-and-the-linnean-society/> The purchase led to the Linnean Society foundation. Without that, the Linnean naming system, one of many at the time, may not have had the crucial support that led to its use in the UK and later adoption worldwide. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/students/modules/hi916/week5/white_the_purchase_of_knowledge.pdf

PLANT HIGHLIGHT - *Eucryphia x nymansensis*

On the Rhododendron Walk, facing the Hydrangeas, level with the start of the Azalea Trail, there is a tall narrow tree (Bed 46C) that is currently a mass of white blossoms.

The generic name *Eucryphia* comes from the Greek for "well hidden". This is very appropriate for the two *Eucryphia x nymansensis* in beds 46C (one of which is hidden near to the fence) and the one in bed 46D. None appear to have visible labels.

The flowers are white with numerous stamens. Individually, the flowers are intricate; collectively they provide a white wall against glossy dark green leaves.

The tall columnar nature of the tree, along with its late blooming habit in July and August, make it a good option for small gardens.

The genus *Eucryphia* includes seven species. Five are from Australia and Tasmania and two are from south-central Chile and Argentina. This geographic distribution is evidence that supports the theory of continental drift.

Eucryphia x nymansensis 'Nymansay' was a deliberate cross of the two Chilean species (*E. cordifolia* x *E. glutinosa*) in the garden of Lt Colonel Messel at Nymans in Sussex in the UK in 1915. From the offspring, two were selected, 'Nymans A' and 'Nymans B'. 'Nymans A' was chosen for exhibition and named, quite logically, 'Nymansay'.

https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~gdk/stabg_new/poms/2002/septpom02.htm

In 1915, the head gardener of Nymans was James Comber. He was the father of Harold Comber, the plant collector, and was a grandfather of Mary Comber-Miles, who became resident botanical artist at the University of British Columbia. She exhibited at VanDusen <http://barbaralambert.com/writer/author/books/134-Mary%2BComber%2BMiles> After showing in the Floral Hall for decades, she was one of the first to use the new Discovery Room in 2012 <http://vancouver.sun.com/news/staff-blogs/something-about-marys-super-plant-paintings>

Lt Colonel Messel's house at Nymans burnt down in 1947. It was partly rebuilt and became the home of Leonard Messel's daughter Anne Messel and her second husband, the 6th Earl of Rosse. Her first husband was Ronald Armstrong-Jones with whom she had a son, Anthony Armstrong-Jones. Princess Margaret married him in 1960 and on July 12th, 1986 she opened the Alma VanDusen Garden. There is a commemorative plaque on the meadow side of the Stone Garden marking this event.

For cultivar details see: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/3336150/How-to-grow-Eucryphia.html>

Thanks are due to Guide Agnes M. for drawing attention to this remarkable tree.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

There is a huge wealth of material freely available online. Sometimes serendipity reveals items of interest when looking for something else. The link:

http://www.rbge.org.uk/assets/files/Publications/Botanics_winter_03.pdf

gives the Winter 2003 edition of '**The Botanics**' - **The Magazine of the National Botanic Gardens of Scotland**.

Page 5 has an article about 'Repatriating Rhododendrons', including the rare Rhododendron uvarifolium - VanDusen has one in Bed 130A.

Page 7 has an article about 'Plant Passports and Paperwork', dealing with the problems of importing plant material in an age when we are aware of the dangers of invasive species and the spread of plant diseases.

Remember you can always look for online Guiding inspiration in Erica's Book at:

<http://www.ericanotebook.com/>

Until Patti B's return soon, please send any comments, suggestions for future "Weekly Update" topics, questions etc. to: malcolmjhunter@hotmail.co.uk