

WEEKLY UPDATE – JUNE 11 – 18, 2017

“As I lay yonder in tall grass
A drunken bumble-bee went past
Delirious with honey toddy.
The golden sash about his body
Could scarce keep in his swollen belly
Distent with honeysuckle jelly...”

Henry Augustin Beers (1847-1926), “Bumble-Bee”

Summer doesn't officially begin until June 21; in the meantime, it is teasing us with a few days of heat followed by rain and more rain. There is very little to report.

1. Radios – Please return the radios to their charging stands in the locked radio cabinet at the end of your shift. Also ensure that they are turned off and sitting securely in their charging cradles. If they are not adequately charged, they will fail during the next day's shift.
2. Just a reminder to return the radio cabinet key to the drawer at the Visitor Services desk at the end of your shift.
3. Seen in the garden: the blue Himalayan poppies blooming in the S-H Garden
: *Rosa 'Ghislaine de Feligonde'* climbing up over the iron arch at the entrance to the Formal Rose Garden
: the lovely allee of pink *Cornus kousa 'Satomi'* is in bloom

Guide Goings On

There are no meetings during July and August; however, the Gardener's Walks will continue.

1. Thursday, July 6 – Gardener's Walk with Miguel M. through the Canadian Heritage, Vegetable and Alma VanDusen Gardens.
Meet on the Plaza at 10:00am

Garden Goings On

1. ZimCarvings with Patrick Sephani and visiting artist Peter Kananji
June 16 – September 30
Discovery Room and in the Garden
2. UP-CLOSE presented by the Vancouver en-plein-air Group
Until June 27 in the Library

3. Medicine Wheel Ceremony
Sunday, June 18 – 12:00pm – 3:00pm
A celebration of the Summer Solstice (June 21)

Garden Clippings

1. In the “Weekly Update” archives for 2015
 - June 19-25 – Mock orange/Syringa, roses

In the “Weekly Update” archives for 2016

 - June 18-25 – Catalpa, European Ash
2. For those who missed it the first time around, Knowledge Network will be reprising Monty Don’s “The Secret History of the English Garden” starting on Thursday, June 15. The first episode explores the history and evolution of the British garden in the 17th century
3. For those of you interested in bees, check out www.beesmatter.ca, a website developed by a partnership of Canadian agricultural organizations, all of whom have a vested interest in honeybee health. The website represents “an initiative to restate agriculture’s commitment to honeybees and bring knowledge to the Canadian public about how they can get involved and help honeybees.”

While it reinforces the message that honeybees are doing well in Canada, it highlights the need for greater awareness of the fragility of bee populations and their potential disappearance in North America due to disease, pesticide use, flowerless landscapes and monolithic crop planting.

There is a wealth of information here for teachers, farmers and the general public presented *via* a variety of beautifully produced educational resources including gorgeous videos and downloadable ‘toolkits’.

For those interested in setting up your own bee-friendly garden, a free packet of seeds containing 5 varieties of non-invasive bee-friendly flowers is available as part of National Planting Week (June 5-12) which, alas, is almost over.

Doing its own part to promote bee awareness, VanDusen Garden’s Adult Education Program is offering 2 classes with Master Beekeeper Brian Campbell in June and July.

Saturday, June 17 – “Helping Bees in Your Urban Garden”
Saturday, July 29 – “Know Your Bees of BC”

Summer Reading

In the *New York Times Book Review* "Summer Reading" issue (June 4, 2017) the "Outdoors" section editor, Dominique Browning, identifies some books, new and old, that are worthy of our attention.

Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries From a Secret World* (reviewed in the Sept. 24-Oct. 1, 2016 "WU" and still on the BC Books Bestseller List) receives praise as a "worthy addition to tree literature".

"Birds are a miracle because they prove to us there is a finer,
simpler state of being we may strive to attain."

Douglas Coupland (1961-present), *Life After God*

BirdsArtLife by Canadian children's author Kyo Maclear is described as a "wondrous little book", a meditative journey undertaken while she cares for her aging father. Accompanying an amateur bird watcher for a year, she learns to still her mind as she begins to focus on small things, to observe and listen more closely as she ponders life's larger issues. She has illustrated her introspective writing with her drawings of both birds and people. One of her discoveries is "If you listen to birds, every day will have a song in it."

If you want a minimum of text accompanying glorious pictures of birds, then *Tori*, by Japan's Yamamoto Masao will appeal to you. Browning is moved by the "hush [that] hovers over these luminescent, silvery gray, blue-toned or sepia images; I found myself holding my breath as I turned the pages."

Because bird life is now going to be an integral part of our guiding practice, these books might provide ideas, insight and inspiration.

The Black Garden

Last Thursday (June 8) was wet and miserable with very few visitors in the garden. But it was warm and the air was soft, so, to make the most of their guiding shift, the Thursday guides took turns going out to experience the garden in the rain and to seize the opportunity to take pictures using the knowledge acquired from Jeff De Jong's excellent presentation that morning, "Gardening Photography: More Than a Picture" e.g. practical strategies such as backlighting and getting up close; the purpose and meaning behind the picture and finding the story that it should tell. There was no shortage of raindrops on petals and foliage to enhance their images and some beautiful photos were the result.

A wander over to the White Garden, Vandusen's quiet and secluded 'hortus conclusus', revealed that not much is happening there yet, although the tall bearded *Iris* 'Immortality', white fireweed and the lovely white Alba rose, *Rosa* 'Mme. Legras de St. Germaine' provided bright spots on this grey day. The hybrid mock-orange, *Philadelphus x purpureomaculatus* 'Belle Etoile' has lots of unopened buds, so we have the blooming of this scent-laden shrub to look forward to in the coming weeks.

A few of us drifted down through the Black Garden where flats of annuals waiting to be planted were strewn along the path, the gardeners having temporarily sought shelter from the rain. The Black Garden is always interesting and beautiful with the contrast between its many dark plants and the explosions of bright green grasses and pops of red and orange geraniums and begonias. Rose fragrance scented the air and halfway down the path a *Cotinus coggyria* (Golden Spirit) = 'Ancot' was like a blast of much desired sunshine. In a few weeks time, when the newly planted flowers take hold and the roses start to bloom in earnest, this area will be stunning.

Please continue to send questions, comments and suggestions to pkbuchanan@shaw.ca or write them down on the appropriate pages in the Information Binder. They are always welcome and greatly appreciated. And check out www.ericanotebook.com for additional resources to inspire and inform your guiding practice.

Have a great week of guiding!

"Fair month of roses! Who would sing her praise..."
Mrs. Caroline Atherton (Briggs) Mason (1823-1890), "June"