

WEEKLY UPDATE – OCTOBER 22 – 29, 2017

“The richness of the rain made me feel safe and protected; I have always considered the rain to be healing – a blanket – the comfort of a friend. Without at least some rain in any given day, or at least a cloud or two on the horizon, I feel overwhelmed by the information of sunlight and yearn for the vital muffling gift of falling water.”

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

As I write this, the ‘wet coast’ is preparing for another deluge, the third big rain storm this week; last year’s wild wind brought down trees and closed the garden for the weekend. And the year before, it was the same: rain and more rain as the guiding season drew to a close. In spite of uprooted trees, clogged and brimming gutters, piles of sodden leaves, overflowing catch basins and bedraggled gardens, let’s consider the words of Langston Hughes, “Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops. Let the rain sing a lullaby.” After another summer of terrifying fire and choking smoke, let’s celebrate the rain!

This will be the last “Weekly Update” of the regular 2017 guiding season although the Sunday guides (go, Sunday guides!!) will continue to provide tours throughout the winter and early spring. Once again, in spite of this year’s weather extremes, it has been another successful season. There is very little to report.

1. Please record your volunteer hours and submit them to Heidi Jakop.
2. Please remember to turn the radios **OFF** before securing them snugly in their cradles.
3. The trolley will be undergoing maintenance and repair over the winter. Its wheels will be replaced with non-braking wheels; blocks will be provided to ensure that the trolley does not roll away.

In this quiet period between the already past Canadian and the upcoming American Thanksgiving, it is appropriate to thank the many people who made the 2017 guiding season so memorable.

1. Thanks to the gardeners who, as always, are so willing to share their knowledge and answer our questions on the monthly Gardeners’ Walks and as we tour our guests around the garden. These personal interactions enhance the visitors’ experience.
2. Thanks to the guides who put so much energy, expertise and enthusiasm into not only the welcoming and touring of visitors, but also into the many other mundane guiding responsibilities that ensure the season runs smoothly: cart co-ordination and repair; radio and trolley maintenance; researching and writing up of self-guided tours; organizing the Gardeners Walks and guide

education presentations; gathering and collating archive material; keeping track of the finances; fundraising; team communications and leadership; training and mentoring apprentices, to name a few of the tasks that keep us busy.

3. Thanks to Marilyn G. for her continuing superb work on the www.ericanotebook.com site. The material that she posts regularly is now being linked to other pages on the site containing similar information. You are encouraged to visit the site for excellent resources that will help you expand your knowledge, plan your tours and enhance your guiding practice.
4. Thanks to Marina P. in the Josef Wosk Library for providing so many wonderful resources: reference materials, books to satisfy all kinds of reading tastes and needs, magazines and journals and, of particular interest to VDG guides, all of the archived materials.
5. Thanks to all who provided regular feedback and material for the “Weekly Update” this year. Your comments, questions, suggestions and corrections were always welcome and very much appreciated. They will be even more welcome, next year, I am sure, when Sunday guide Ashley L-M. assumes the authorship of this newsletter. Thank you, Ashley!!
6. And, of course, a special shout out to Malcolm H. for filling in so reliably for me during my absences this past May and August. He assumed these responsibilities while also preparing the monthly *Gazette* and writing a newsletter for the Bloedel docents.

If I have forgotten to acknowledge anyone (which I am sure I have), please accept my sincere apologies.

Guide Goings On

1. Thursday, November 9 – Guide Education/Business Meeting
Carl C., a Tuesday guide, will be talking about Chinese culture, legends, myths, and folklore *vis a vis* plants of Chinese origin in the garden.
2. Thursday, December 7 – Annual Guide Christmas Potluck Luncheon
Stay tuned as more details will be forthcoming from your captains.

Garden Goings On

1. Works by Vicky Earle
Until December 30 at the Bloedel Conservatory and Josef Wosk Library
2. Dried Flower Arrangers’ Sale

Friday, October 27; Saturday, October 28; Sunday, October 29
1:00-4:00pm (Saturday, 10:00am-4:00pm), HSBC Arrival Hall

Garden Clippings

1. In the “Weekly Update” archives for 2016
October 22-29 – Fall Colour

In the Weekly Update” archives for 2015
October 23-29 – Hortus Botanicus in Amsterdam, marmalade

Autumn in the Garden – ‘Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness...’ – and Rain!

The fall is a time of gathering in, taking stock and, like the leaves drifting from the trees, of letting go. Time seems to slow down a little and in this pause, we are given opportunities to contemplate the changes wrought by the passage of time even as preparations and plans for next year linger and percolate in the backs of our minds. It is a good time to engage in some shinrin- yoku practice, i.e. forest bathing, which this week can literally mean a getting wet experience.

Even in the rain, the garden is glowing, its colours, sounds and scents amplified by the moisture, the textures of leaves and branches as we brush against them more palpable and the feel of the ground underfoot more evident as we squelch along the soggy woodland trails or across the lawns or puddle jump on the paved paths. It is too bad that the inclement weather keeps most visitors away although a few intrepid souls know that a wet garden is an exceptionally beautiful place and provides amazing opportunities for looking, feeling, describing and marveling as well as the comfort that Coupland identifies. Photographers know that they can capture some stunning images of water, raindrops and wet plants.

A few blossoms and buds still linger on the little unassuming *Franklinia* tucked away on the Autumn Stroll. The faded and flattened autumn crocus might lift their fragile heads in the sun and provide some delicate colour among the more robust autumnal hues in the garden. This being Vancouver, the roses will continue to bloom. The ginkgos are turning gold and the bald cypress needles are displaying a bright array of bronze, orange and bright yellow, a glowing fanfare before they fall. If they still have their leaves after this week’s pummeling, the garden’s deciduous trees, especially the golden *Robinia pseudoacacia* ‘Frisia’ and vivid red maples, provide bright beacons through or above the density of the darker, more forbidding conifers.

In the Black Garden, a plenitude of fruits, berries, hips and drupes gleam wetly on bending branches, reflecting light like little mirrors in the dense shrubbery. Glistening carved pumpkins decorate the Plaza and line the paths as the garden anticipates the arrival of little visitors for the Glow in the Garden event scheduled

for the week before Hallowe'en (a reminder that the garden will be closing early this coming week).

Birds love the wet weather and the gentle quacking of the ducks as they navigate their watery environment complements the patter of the rain and the splashing of the fountains in Livingstone and Heron Lakes. Tiny kinglets and an assortment of chirpers and tweeters perch on wet branches in the undergrowth or flutter from tree to tree. The orange chevrons on the breasts of flickers flash as they dart across the paths and disappear into the dripping foliage.

So, to make a celebration of the rain richer and more meaningful, take a stroll through the wet garden and let the experience refresh and/or restore your emotional, physical and spiritual well-being (mind, body, soul).

Enjoy a 'spooktacular' Hallowe'en at home and in the garden!!

Don't forget that Daylight Savings Time ends on November 5; fall back an hour!

Enjoy the final week of guiding! Stay warm and dry!

"A gypsy fire is on the hearth,
Sign of the carnival of mirth;
Through the dun fields and from the glade
Flash merry folk in masquerade,
For this is Hallowe'en!"

Author unknown