

VANDUSEN GUIDE NEWSLETTER

VanDusen Botanical Garden - Connecting People to Plants and the Natural Environment



VANDUSEN'S SEED COLLECTORS

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When this opportunity to write in the Guides Newsletter arose, we not only wanted you to know how grateful we are to you all, we wanted guides, new or experienced, to know a little more about us. I made an informal survey of the Sunday and Tuesday Seed Collectors asking what they think you should know about us. Surprising but undeniably, the majority want you to know we are having fun. So maybe I better explain why and how our small group of likeminded people from all corners of the Lower Mainland get their “kicks” trudging around the 55 acres of a botanical garden harvesting seeds.

We think we are having fun when;

- Researching plants/plant names to keep our collection correctly identified,
- Watching, tagging and impatiently waiting to gather seeds at their peak without damage to the garden beds—sometimes they look a bit improved,
- Trying to collect each species with minimum chaff because later we will be separating chaff and seed using sieves, tweezers and even toothpicks,
- Learning to use Jeff Kingsley’s new inventory/harvest system on the computer we are happy to share with VanDusen’s labelling group,
- Measuring or counting seeds into our plastic packets for deck trays or web orders,
- Participating in all VanDusen special events,
- Hosting a bi-annual luncheon for Tuesday volunteers, VBGA and Parks Board staff. This event and our end of harvest luncheon are traditions begun by our wise and wonderful former leader, Aimee Murrell,
- Taking great trips (at each participants expense) to U.B.C. Vancouver Island, Seattle, Fraser Valley—anywhere with gardens, nurseries and sometimes wineries, (Wineries are botanical, you know.)
- Promoting and supporting plant diversity at Seedy Saturday, which also, espouses preserving Canadian’s native/heritage seeds,
- Figuring out ways to be frugal recyclers so we can donate more and more money to VanDusen -you guides help raise a good portion of this.
- Having meetings that barely interrupt the flow of conversations or laughter because we enjoy the company of our fellow seed collectors. While our hands are busy, we visit with our good friends. Some of these friends are also guides .

Traditionally, each October we put out trays of free seeds and invite guides and volunteers to help them selves. These gifts are intended to be an expression of gratitude for all your efforts to find good homes for our seed packets.

Thank you.

Mary Palmore, Seed Collectors’ Chair

*"Summer ends, and
Autumn comes, and he
who would have it
otherwise would have
high tide always and a
full moon every night"
- Hal Borland*

*Come and browse
through our many new
books on bees and roses.
Do you have any books
that you would like to
see in the Library that
we don't already have? I
would love hear some of
your suggestions.*

*VanDusen Library
will be selling books to
raise funds for the
VBGA at the 2007
Garden Show, so
donations of books and
magazines are very
much appreciated (but
please, no Gardens West
and Pacific Horticulture
magazines, as we have
too many of them
already and no place for
storage)*

*Marina Prncz
Librarian
VanDusen Botanical
Garden Library
Tel. 604-257-8668*

GUIDE CALENDAR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2006

LEGEND:

FH Floral Hall EC Education Centre VL Volunteer Lounge CR Cedar Room

SEPTEMBER

- 7 1st Thursday Garden Walk 10:00 am..... VL
- 7 Guide Council Meeting 12:00 noon..... CR
- 14 Guide Meeting & Speaker..... 9:30 am..... FH
- 21 Continuing Education..... 10:00 am..... CR

OCTOBER

- 5 1st Thursday Garden Walk 10:00 am..... VL
- 5 Guide Council Meeting 12:00 noon..... VL
- 9 Cart Season scheduled to end
- 12 Guide Meeting & Speaker..... 7:15 pm..... FH
- 19 Continuing Education..... 10:00 am..... CR
- 29 2006 Guiding Season ends

NOVEMBER

- 2 Guide Council Meeting 12:00 noon..... VL
- 9 Guide Meeting & Speaker..... 10:00 am..... FH
- 16 Continuing Education..... 10:00 am..... CR
- 21 Captains' /Vice-Captains' Meeting 10:00 am..... FH

DECEMBER

- 14 Guide Christmas Party evening..... FH

GUIDE CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Flora of Garibaldi Park - A Historical Retrospective

September 14th at 9:30 am
Speaker: Daniel Mosquin
Combined Guides/Master Gardeners meeting

Conservation & Biodiversity of the Native Flora of Southwestern BC

September 21st at 10:00 am
Speaker: Michael Le Geyt

Ponds

October 12th at 7:15 pm
Speaker: Gwen Odermatt

Green Roofs - Getting off the Ground

November 9th at 10:00 am
Speaker: Colleen MacDonald



A NOTE FROM THE GUIDE CHAIR

During the past summer, some new and exciting things have been happening in the Garden. First, we have a new Garden Director, Chris Woods. You will have seen the announcement and we look forward to welcoming him on September 18th.

Second, at our Guide Council meeting in August, we formed a new Continuing Education Working Group. As continuing education is so important to Guides this working group (chair, vice-chair and 3 members) has a vital function planning and organizing speakers for our meetings, continuing education programs (formerly Advanced Guide Training), monthly Garden walks with the Gardeners, and other activities. We have very interesting programs for September including Michael LeGeyt on the 21st speaking about native flora in southwestern B.C. If you have ideas for programs/speakers, please contact Sheila Veuger, chair, or Sally Maclachlan, vice-chair.

The Continuing Education Working Group chair or vice-chair represents Guides on the newly formed VanDusen Education Council which met in June. The Education Council's goal is to enhance and promote learning activities at VanDusen so that the education mandate of botanic gardens is achieved, i.e., playing a role in global efforts to conserve plant diversity through education. Council members include representatives of all the various groups and individuals providing education for the public and others at the Garden. It meets quarterly and will discuss common issues; exchange information; identify, coordinate & enhance synergies within education activities; and, evaluate education programs.

Another new development has been the bee exhibit and the fields of grain. Both exhibits have wonderful new signage designed and produced by Cindy Sayre, Collections Interpretation Coordinator. As a Guide I found these signs of great assistance in interpreting these area of the Garden.

As you know brochures and our foreign language tours are now available in the pamphlet rack on the deck. We have newly translated foreign language tours in 8 languages, thanks to the assistance of many guides and others. Special thanks to Joan Baker who developed the basic tour in English which was used to develop the tours by: Leslie Lam (Chinese tour), Eunice Rhu (Korean tour), Beatrice Carlani (Italian tour and arranging French translation), Lucia Hoess (German and Spanish tours), and Anna Lee Boulton (Japanese tour). I am sure our visitors will greatly appreciate their efforts. And lastly, great news! The VBGA has agreed to purchase one new cart for us. Purchase arrangements are being negotiated.

As the 2006 guiding season nears an end, except, of course, for our Sunday Guides, I hope it has been an enjoyable one for you. The Captains and vice-Captains will be meeting in November to review our year. If you have comments or suggestions, please pass them on to your Captain.

Happy Autumn and I hope to see you in the fall,

Claire Kermacks



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*"The hazy, cloudless
skies of Indian Summer.
Leaves scurrying down
the street before the
wind.
The cold shiver from an
arctic blast.
Indian Summer.
The last warmth of the
sun.
Chilly mornings and
glorious warm afternoons.
The Harvest Moon.
The Hunter's Moon.
The Rainy Season.
Dry corn stalks
clattering in the wind.
The touch of frost on
grass and window pane.
The smell of burning
leaves."
- Keith C. Heidorn*



VANDUSEN'S NEW GARDEN DIRECTOR

On August 22, 2006, the Vancouver Park Board and VanDusen Botanical Garden Association announced the appointment of Christopher Woods to the position of Garden Director, VanDusen Botanical Garden. Mr. Woods will assume his new responsibilities on September 18, 2006. With 35 years in the horticultural and public garden fields, Mr. Woods brings to VanDusen Garden a wealth of skills and experience in public garden management, garden design, plant collection management as well as in the restoration of facilities and the building of new ones.

FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

Joan Hendrika Nolet

April 7, 1915 - July 23, 2006

In July, Guides, Seed Collectors and many others at VanDusen were saddened to learn of Joan's death. Joan was a long-time volunteer who was a seed collector for about 20 years.

Joan's garden roots began early as her family had a wonderful vegetable garden and, in 1924, Joan received an award for the best collection of wild flowers at her Thetis Island School. Travel, bridge and her volunteer activities at VanDusen were her social life. Joan was a quiet, modest and caring person who was independent, bright and thoroughly reliable. She will be missed by all her friends and family.

Excerpt from the eulogy by Gary Mullins, her nephew

A NOTE FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAILER

Hi to all of you,

Patti Lazzerini very kindly has asked me to write a brief note in your newsletter this month to bring you up to date on the activities of the Capital Campaign.

While I thought summer would slow down a bit, it's been just the opposite as discussions and subsequent proposals have been written to Cultural Spaces, Canadian Heritage and to TD Canada Trust. Meetings have been held with HSBC as well as many individuals and other corporations. Thirsty Thursday, on August 10th, honoring BMO Bank of Montreal's gift for \$200,000, attracted 276 in ticket sales. The rain held off - barely - the Garden looked beautiful and BMO's gift is a fabulous demonstration of their belief in the future of VanDusen.

Building Committee meetings have begun with Park Board representatives, and a time-line has been established for Phase 1 of the Capital Project. Fall, 2006 - Request for Proposal will go to architects; Late fall 2006 - Architect hired; Spring 2007 - plans and tender documents prepared by architects; Late Spring - tendering to construction firms; Fall 2007 - construction starts; Late 2008 - completion of construction of Phase 1.

So - it's starting! What up to now has been just a dream, is becoming a reality and soon you will be volunteering in brand new facilities! My hope is that you will all wish to participate in this rejuvenation to make our beloved VanDusen as fabulous inside as it is outside - a treasure that has people asking "what's on at VanDusen this month?" I look forward to seeing you around the Garden.

Mary Butterfield
Capital Campaign Director
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MY GARDEN ROOTS BY ANTONIE GABRIEL

My awareness of plants and growing things developed in agrarian parishes either along or near the Red River that flows through the state of Louisiana. The landscape that defined those parishes differed in dramatic fashion, giving rise to verdure that bordered on paradise: Forests, fields, prairies, bayous and rivers, marshland, natural springs and vast flood plains comprised the backdrop to everyday life.

I was raised in Winnfield, a town of about 6,000 people, nestled in the rolling hills and pine forests of north Louisiana, a parish seat that hosted the annual Forest Festival and was a centre of the forest industry. In fact, Winnfield was situated in the heart of the Kisatchie National Forest.

In spring, white and pink splashes of dogwood cut the native forests of dark green pine and oak. Though I cannot remember the sequence, azalea and redbud, gardenia and camellia, joined the floral cacophony that always seemed to finish too quickly. In my maternal grandmother's garden in Winnfield, rows of daffodil and stands of canna and amaryllis grew alongside spider lilies, marigolds, zinnias and lantana. Nandina struggled in that climate, while wisteria flourished. The flowers of the four o'clock intrigued me, because they opened and closed in the afternoon. In summer, my cousin and I would go out to check this important event every day. Here, I climbed the crepe myrtles, the sycamore, and the privet hedge that grew tall and thick enough for children to find a bower on top.

Next door in my own yard, I climbed a tulip tree, a huge weeping willow, and occasionally the pines. A persimmon tree grew in the middle of a hedge. My own little potato garden grew nearby and my white chrysanthemum bed was situated between blue hydrangeas. A sweet gum tree and daylilies grew beside the garage near the tomato garden. I would climb the gum tree onto the garage roof to play hide and seek in the large old holly tree that grew on the other side of the garage. Prickly leaves did not dissuade me because I trimmed out two cubbyholes, one for me and one for my younger brother. I don't think any grownups suspected that children might be hiding in the holly.

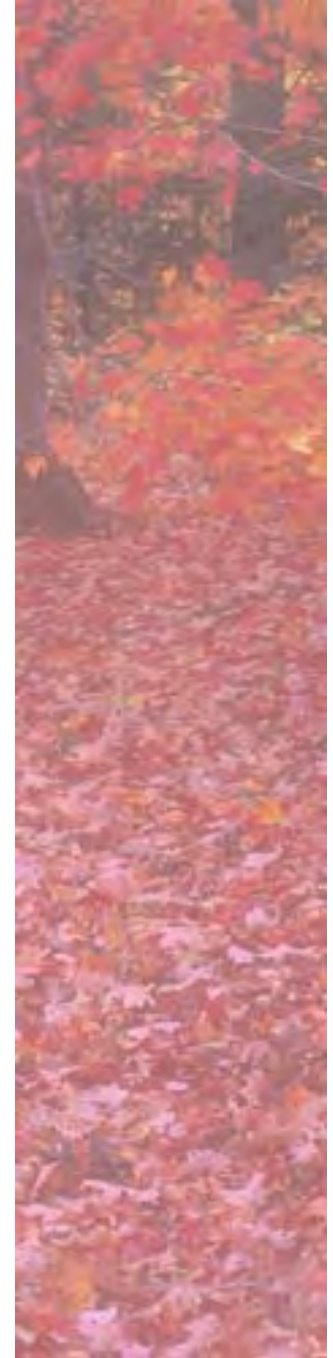
Growing up, gardens were more than the place that I played. That magnificent assemblage of growing things nourished my soul. In those magical spaces, I had many surprising friends: gentle summer breezes with their sweet kiss of friendship; the sensitive mimosa tree, a teacher with something to say; and the tall pampas grass, a herald. As for the cornucopia of homegrown vegetables shared by neighbours and friends, these staples had graced the Louisiana table since colonial times.

When we drove south to Boyce, a once flourishing river town, I glimpsed the bygone days of the steamboat era. As hills flattened out, we saw pecan groves and fields of red earth planted with cotton, sugar cane, and soybean. Here, protected by levees rising from the alluvial flood plain of the Red River, Victorian houses nestled amidst magnolia, pine, oak and palm.

The 'old house', where my father's mother lived, faced a cul de sac that intersected a bayou. Tall bulrushes grew in the streambed. Festooned with mistletoe and Spanish moss, a congregation of oak trees presided over this street. I remember eating homemade fig ice cream made with figs grown in the back yard. On the front porch after dark, sitting on the swing, my grandmother would teach me the constellations. Crickets chirped. Bullfrogs croaked. Stars twinkled.

Not far away near Alexandria, I remember visiting a raised plantation home with a floor of red silt. Once again flat, red, rich alluvial earth signified that we were in river country. The red dirt floor and promenade of the lower story really stuck in my memory, as I pondered how you could have a flood when you couldn't see the river.

*Swinging on delicate hinges the autumn leaf almost off the stem -
Jack Kerouac*



I was a freckled, tree climbing, singing and skipping child who loved to be outdoors in the garden. I loved the butterflies and birdsong, big bugs and frogs, chameleons, crawfish, mud puddles, sunshine and big round raindrops that often fell in the afternoon. During fierce tropical storms, I listened to pines groaning under the weight of heavy wind. Before the storm an uncomfortable stillness would prevail, and after, the air would be fresh and invigorating, and I would soon be outdoors once again.

With garden roots that stretch to my childhood paradise, VanDusen Botanical Garden provides a home away from home for me. Many plants in our collection bring back memories of gardens past and provide deeper meaning to early rites of passage that went hand in hand with a life long devotion to gardens and the joy they bring to people's lives.

There are many other gardens in Louisiana that I enjoyed visiting, including Hodges Gardens in Many, Kent House Plantation in Alexandria, Oakley Plantation in St. Francisville, Destrehan Plantation and Nottoway, both located on the River Road that runs between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, as well as my aunt's garden in Shreveport where a woodland canopy provided cover for rare plants and hundreds of songbirds. For easy access to information on these places, Google the "Louisiana State University Herbarium", click on "Links and Resources", click on "Guide to Parks, Gardens and Ecotourism" and then click on the places I have mentioned, and print the 7 page list for reference. If you appreciate beautiful gardens and rare species, Louisiana is your next vacation.

Further reading

Irish, Mary. "Gardening Hits and Misses" Taunton's Fine Gardening, September 2006, No. 111, p. 34.

Tidwell, Mike. Bayou Farewell, the Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana's Cajun Coast. New York: Vintage Departures, c2004.

Antoine Gabriel became a volunteer in 2002 and enjoys many satisfying hours at VanDusen, as a Seed Collector and Wednesday guide.

MY FAVOURITE GARDENING BOOK BY JEAN HURST

Those of you who know me probably view the title of this article as an oxymoron. Why would anyone who is a self-professed non-gardener have a favourite gardening book? Well, if I told you that I am referring to *The Garden Color Book* by Paul Williams, would that explain it? This cerlox bound volume, from Chronicle Books, San Francisco, is subtitled "343,000 combinations for your garden". Now do you understand?

Well if not, let me explain. You can't deny that I have developed an eye for colour that, in turn, has translated into some photographic images which are not bad, and which, by the way, I'm always keen to share with anyone who expresses an interest. This book is a self-proclaimed guide to creating plant and colour combinations. It is about all that you need for working with colour in your garden. It includes over 600 entries, incorporating annuals, perennials, bulbs and climbers in the choices it offers you. It also gives you a range of differing heights of plant material to help you achieve a suitable configuration. The colour palettes portion of the book, with each page split into thirds, allow you to mix and match colours until you find a grouping that is pleasing to your eye.

The rest of the book is for real gardeners, those who enjoy getting their hands into the soil, not to say dirty. Provided are details on the need of each plant, including preferred soil conditions, light requirements, their hardiness and any relevant propagation requirements. The book also tells you when the plant will flower or have colour interest. All of this to suit the entire gardening year and ensure that you plan your garden so that you have colour all year long.

Alas, as you've guessed by now, for me the book is eye-candy. One step above a well drawn comic book. I love to flip through at random and see colours that reflect my mood, or that elevate it if I'm feeling blue. I enjoy challenging myself to recognize and name the plants illustrated in each of the nine squares on the page.

Simply put, the book is a source of entertainment for me and not the how-to it would likely be for a dedicated gardener. Does that make it a sinful pleasure. You bet!

To each his or her own.

Jean Hurst has been a fan of VanDusen Garden since its inception. However, it was only in early 1996, after retiring, that she was able to volunteer, initially as a Guide. Since then, her love of the Garden, and the people who make it what it is, has mutated into a beneficial and valued relationship for both parties.

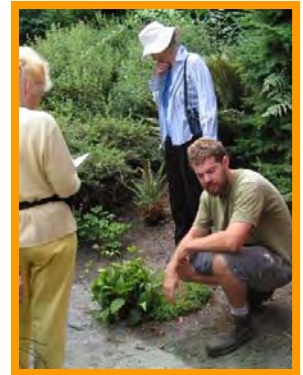
THE THURSDAY GARDEN WALK AUGUST 23, 2006

We began by following the path through the Canadian Heritage Garden and Tomas pointed out the plants and features that he liked at this time of year:

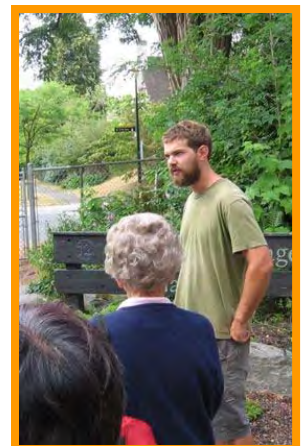
- The Ostrich fern, *Matteuccia* has brilliant green foliage and is a great fern in any woodland setting. The Obedient plant, *Physostegia* has a long flowering period and is native to Eastern North America. The perennial matter in the Floral Emblem area is cut back in the spring and mulched to suppress the fireweed.
- The Sugar Maple grove, in the spring time, is filled with *Trillium*, *Erythronium*, *Sanguinaria* and *Podophyllum*. One of the more interesting plants growing in the grove is *Podophyllum peltatum*, an Eastern North American native which is valued for its medicinal properties, particularly in the field of Cancer research. The *Sanguisorba* and *Cimicifuga* are starting to flower (the purple cultivar is not grown in the Canadian Heritage Garden).
- The Boreal Forest area where, the Sweet fern *Comptomia peregrina* grows, opposite is a neutral area with Asian plants, part of the SinoHimalayan garden. On the corner, a small Alpine area requires attention. Opposite is a white *Epilobium* and by the small path nearby is an *Oxalis* and *Cypripedium* (lady's slipper orchid).
- A group of *Arbutus menziesii* grow at the corner of the Pacific Coast area and they are prone to leaf spots, fungal and bacterial canker problems. Underneath are the seedheads of *Camassia*, which can tolerate moist soils, and *Fritillaria lanceolata*, which cannot take wet soil and the bulbs should be planted on their side in sandy soil.
- Quaking Aspens are not recommended for residential gardens because of their surface rooting are best situated in wild areas. Incidentally, the pond has a leak in the bottom of the membrane which is difficult to repair.
- A group of Canadian Cultivar Roses which are now in bloom. These are grafted plants and the suckers are cut back and dug up in the spring. The *Rubus Pentalobus* groundcover is a UBC introduction.
- The Prairie natives *Monarda*, *Aster*, *Liatris* and *Ratibida Pinnata* which grow along the stone wall of the Prairie Grassland. This area is weeded and mulched to add organic matter. The Medicine Wheel was renovated in the spring, creating pathways to reveal the stones.
- The ailing Birch trees and a Yew hedge near the orchard have been removed and now newly planted Vine Maples will provide canopy for the ferns and huckleberry. The *Thuja* along this side of the maze had to be replaced, due to dieback from the shady canopy of Cedar trees that once grew there, but the replacements delivered last spring were in poor condition and had no root balls. They will be replanted this fall.
- The Heritage Apple trees, which have recently had the whips cut back from 1 to 3 outward facing bud, to produce spurs for fruit within three years. This also keeps the trees compact for maintenance reasons.
- The Bee Area, where three Leyland Cypress and a *Taxodium* were removed to provide sunlight for the bees. *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, *Spiraea douglasii* and *Rubus* have been planted as low-growing replacements.



Guides at the Thursday Garden Walk



in the Canadian Heritage Garden with Tomas Eguizabal



THE THURSDAY GARDEN WALK CONTINUED

- The Grain and Seed area, which has replaced the horseshoe bed of perennials. It is now a destination for garden visitors, new signs have been added and the crops will be rotated annually. Some of the oats and wheat have been eaten by crows. The challenge in renovating this area was whether or not to keep the existing plants. The Chinese Lilacs were kept, as they could have been introduced by settlers. The Weeping Spruce was moved in March and is now successfully growing in Norman's area. The group of *Fraxinus* were under-seeded with grass to provide a picnic area and the adjacent stream was left as a play area.
- The Alma VanDusen Garden, which Tomas planted for an abstract pink and orange tiered effect. The stunted plants at the far end of the bed may be due to a phosphorus deficiency because of woodchip mulch acidity, or soil toxicity from herbicide use. More perennials should be added to the Oriental poppy bed for late season colour.
- The *Echinops*, *Eryngium*, *Acanthus*, *Thalictrum* and *Verbascum olympicum* grow alongside the path leading up the hill. These were Dave's favourites.
- The Meadow Garden, where perennials have been added to the grasses. The bed by the stream was not mulched and the plants are better established than those in the larger bed, which were mulched with 8" of bark mulch and as a result are stunted and unhealthy. With such a heavy mulch, it is difficult for water to penetrate the root zone. The bark chips steal nitrogen from the plants and prevent the uptake of other nutrients, due to the bark chips acidic nature. No more than 4" of mulch should have been used in this application and the root balls should have been planted in soil, not mulch. A slow release fertilizer and lime were added in the spring to improve the growth of the plants.

Joan Baker records all the Garden walks and copies can be found at the Information Booth. She is the Captain of the Sunday walking guide team.

Tomas Eguizabal devised this walk for the guides. He joined the Vancouver Parks Board in 2005 as an apprentice in their four year programme and worked in many areas of the city, before being assigned to VanDusen Garden last year. He looks after Dave Kuklo's area, which includes the Canadian Heritage Garden and the Alma VanDusen Garden. Tomas will be with us until October, when he goes to Stanley Park. He has two more years of apprenticeship and would then like to return to VanDusen Garden.



We're on the Web!

visit us at:

www.vandusengarden.org