

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for planning a field trip to VanDusen Botanical Garden. This spectacular 22-hectare (55-acre) garden, right in the heart of Vancouver, was first opened to the public in 1975. Our mild climate allows the cultivation of an outstanding plant collection set amidst rolling lawns, tranquil lakes and dramatic rockwork with vistas of the mountains and Vancouver cityscape. With its excellent plant collections and the beauty of their display, the Garden promotes knowledge and understanding of the world of plants and their fundamental importance to life.

Your 90 minute guided program will consist primarily of a series of hands-on activities through selected areas of the Garden. Your group will be subdivided into smaller groups and guided by trained volunteers. In the case of seriously inclement weather, some of the activities may be conducted undercover outside the visitor centre.

Your pre-visit package contains general information on the school program policies and guidelines, directions to the garden, and resource materials to support the learning experience for your students. **Please be sure that every teacher attending the field trip receives all pre-visit materials.** Feel free to make as many copies of this package as needed.

As you plan your visit to the Garden, please use the **Field Trip Checklist** and the pre-visit letter for your chaperones. We look forward to your visit to VanDusen Botanical Garden and hope that you and your students will have an exciting and educational adventure.

Kind regards,

Tania Clarke

Education Assistant

Ph: 604-718-5898

schoolprograms@vandusen.org

Gillian Drake

Education Director

School Program Policies and Guidelines

1. **Arrival:** Plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to your program start time. Make sure everyone has used the washroom and eaten any snacks by the scheduled start time. You will be met by Education staff in the **Entrance hall of the Visitor Centre**. Feel free to seat your class on the long wooden bench while you wait.
2. **Payment:** You will be paying **Education staff, NOT the Admissions desk**. Payment by **cheque** or **credit card** are accepted on arrival, **payable to: Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association**. A receipt will be emailed to you via the *Amilia* online booking system. If your school needs to mail a cheque after your program, we will send you an invoice with balance owing via the online booking system.
3. **Chaperones:** A minimum of **one** adult is **required** for every **ten** students (including all teachers). **One** adult chaperone for every **four** students receives free entry. Please give a copy of the *Letter to Chaperone* to each adult chaperone.
Any additional adults must pay \$10 if they would like to enter the garden. As the teacher coordinating the field trip, it is your responsibility to ensure that all chaperones understand this and are prepared to pay on arrival.
4. **Cancellations:** Cancellation must be received at least **30 days in advance**. A \$20 administration fee will be deducted from your deposit. The deposit will not be refunded if the cancellation is made less than 30 days in advance. Cancellations must be made in writing to schoolprograms@vandusen.org
5. **Special Needs:** Please let us know in advance if your class includes special needs students, including ESL. Tours may be modified to assist students as necessary. Any student aides accompanying special needs children do not have to pay admission.
6. **Attire:** This is an outdoor program! Please wear comfortable clothing which may get dirty or wet, and flat, comfortable shoes or boots.
7. **First Aid:** Any first aid required must be administered by a representative from the school, and not by staff or volunteers of VanDusen Botanical Garden.
8. **Cameras/Cell Phones/iPods:** Cameras are allowed, but please do not stop the tour or interrupt the program to take pictures. Cellular phones or other electronic devices **must be turned to silent and used only for emergency** during tours.
9. **Lunch:** You are welcome to have a picnic lunch in the Garden independently. No refrigeration facilities are available. Please, no chewing gum. There is a covered outdoor picnic area beside the Visitor Centre to your left after you enter. There are no indoor eating areas.
10. **Extend your visit:** Feel free to stay in the garden as long as you wish. We have free self-guided activities available to download on our website. A few options include visiting our maze (approx. 45 min including walking from the Visitor Centre), having lunch in the garden, or sending students off on a nature scavenger hunt (worksheet PDFs available upon request).

What is a Botanical Garden?

At first glance, VanDusen Botanical Garden may look like a regular park, however on closer inspection you will find there are labels on plants, interpretive signage and a detailed map to guide you through areas of the garden that have plants from around the world. Our mild Vancouver climate allows the Garden to represent ecosystems that range from across Canada, to tropical South Africa, South America, the Mediterranean, and more. Botanical gardens are living museums, dedicated to cultivation of plants for education, conservation and research.



Our mission at VanDusen is to inspire understanding of the vital importance of plants to all life through the excellence of our botanical collections, programs and practices.

Garden Visitor Guidelines

Please review these guidelines with your students and chaperones

- 1) VanDusen Botanical Garden is a place of beauty with many wonderful plants and animals to see. For this reason, we ask that visitors not pick any living plants or plant parts, and to return any 'natural treasures' you found in the garden before you leave.
- 2) Respect the wildlife in the Garden as this is their home: Spend time observing the wildlife but try to not scare or hurt animals in any way (this includes insects!)
- 3) Respect your fellow Garden visitors: please do not run and make lots of noise in areas where other visitors might be enjoying a quiet time
- 4) Keep to pathways and grassy areas when walking to protect our plants from accidental damage.
- 5) Listen carefully to your Guided Program Leader. Turn cell phones to silent during your program.
- 6) Cameras are welcome, but please refrain from interrupting the flow of the guided program to take posed photos.
- 7) Chaperones must stay with their group at all times.
- 8) When visiting indoor areas of the garden such as washrooms, the classroom or entrance foyer, keep noise to a minimum and remember that other visitors and staff use these spaces
- 9) Place all garbage and recycling in appropriate receptacles. If you can't find a garbage can, put it in your pocket or bag until you do find one.

Have fun and enjoy the amazing world of plants!

VanDusen School Program Checklist

PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

- ✓ Introduce the program to your students with the pre-visit activities provided to you.
- ✓ **Discuss garden etiquette** with your students.
- ✓ **Send letter to chaperones** (included in this package) and make sure they know how to get to the garden. Please ensure that all chaperones understand that any adults in excess of the ratio of 1 adult to 4 students may not be able to participate in the guided program.
- ✓ Ensure students will be **dressed appropriately** for outdoor activities and recommend they bring a bottle of water.
- ✓ Plan your day at VanDusen: will you just be participating in the guided program or would you like to spend more of your day at the Garden? Ask us for self-guided worksheet PDFs.
- ✓ Visit the garden in advance to get a feel for it and see the potential for self-guided activities. (One-time free entry is available upon request for you should you choose to do so.)

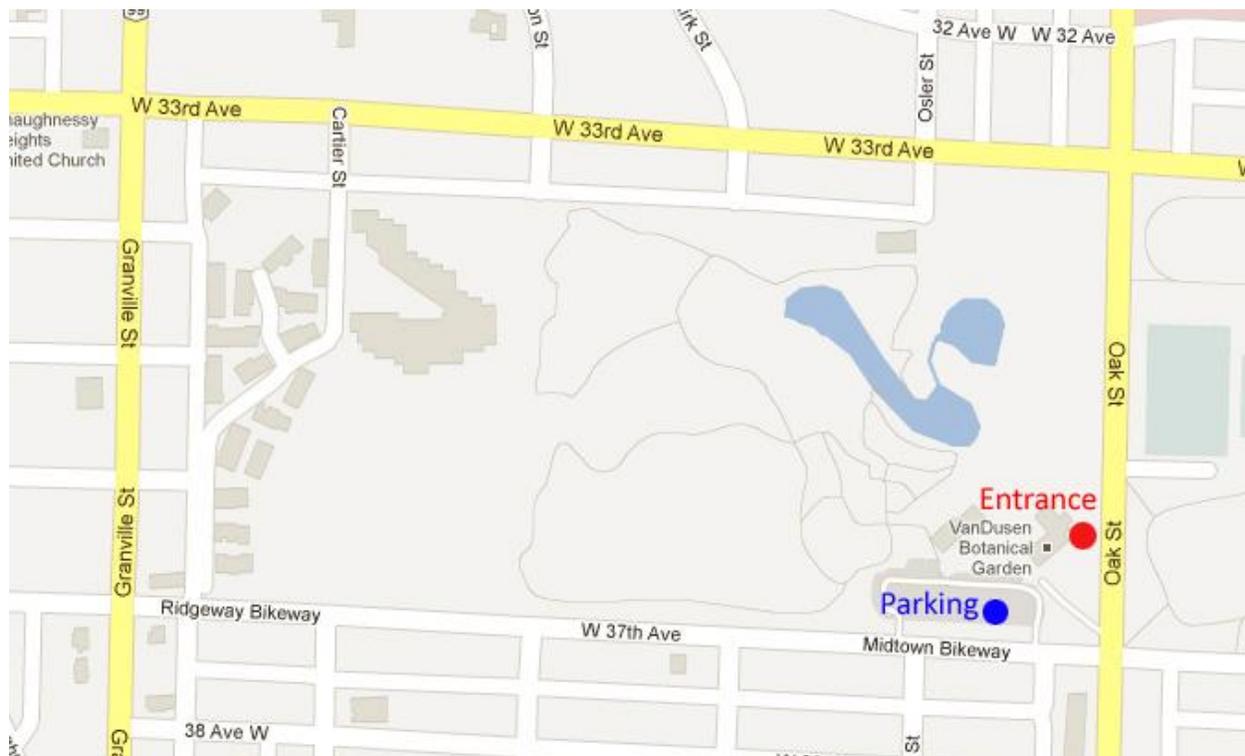
BRING ON YOUR TRIP

- ✓ A cheque with remaining balance payable to VanDusen Botanical Garden Association. You can choose to pay with your credit card – simply notify the Education Assistant, who will be greeting you when you arrive.
- ✓ Directions to the garden.
- ✓ Name tags for your students for the benefit of the volunteers conducting the program.
- ✓ A basic first aid kit. Any first aid required must be administered by a representative from the school, and not by staff or volunteers of VanDusen Botanical Garden.

Have a wonderful time at VanDusen Botanical Garden!

Directions to the Garden

How will you be getting to VanDusen Botanical Garden? Directions for driving, chartered bus and public transit are described below.



Driving

Free public parking is available just off W 37th Ave. (see “Parking” on map) You can then walk across the wooden bridge from the parking lot down to the Visitor Centre. There’s a long wooden bench for your class to sit on while they wait and washrooms are down the hall to the right.

Public Transit

The Garden entrance is on Oak street, close to W 37th Ave. (See map). Come through the main doors just past the drop-off driveway, and we will meet you in the Arrival Hall. There’s a long wooden bench for your class to sit on while they wait and washrooms are down the hall to the right.

Chartered Bus / School Bus

Chartered or School buses must drop off and pick up your group at the 15 minute drop-off loop directly in front of the Visitor Centre on Oak Street. If your bus is staying at the Garden, they must park in the **northwest end of the parking lot off W 37th Ave. If entering from the parking lot**, walk across the wooden bridge down to the Visitor Centre. There’s a long wooden bench for your class to sit on while they wait and washrooms are down the hall to the right.

Dear Chaperone,

We are pleased that you have chosen to come to VanDusen Botanical Garden as a field trip chaperone. Our goal is to provide students with an educational and enjoyable program. You, along with the teacher, our staff and volunteers, are an important part of the field trip experience.

Entrance to the Garden

The Garden entrance is on Oak street, close to W 37th Ave. (See map). Free public parking is available just off W 37th Ave. (see "Parking" on map) You can then walk across the wooden bridge from the parking lot down to the Visitor Centre. There's a long wooden bench for students to sit on while they wait and washrooms are down the hall to the right.

General Information

This is an outdoor program, so please dress for the weather, including appropriate footwear.

Please assist in keeping students focused and engaged during the program. Our volunteer school program leaders are trained to conduct programs, not to discipline. When on walking tours, stay towards the back of your group to keep the students moving along with the volunteer.

Photos are an excellent way of re-visiting the field trip experience, but we ask that you please do so discretely and not interrupt the flow of the program to take pictures. Cellular phones or other electronic devices must be turned off during tours. If you absolutely must take a call, please step away from the group so that it is not distracting to the students.

We look forward to seeing you here at VanDusen Botanical Garden!

Tania Clarke

Education Assistant

Ph: 604-718-5895

schoolprograms@vandusen.org

Gillian Drake

Education Director

