

The tour starts and ends at the Plaza and lasts about an hour. Please follow the black and white number and arrow signs. Garden maps are available at the Information Desk. Parts of this tour are not wheelchair accessible.

Many paths wind through VanDusen Botanical Garden's 55 acres and more than 50 living collections. While most visitors follow the wider paved or gravel pathways, this tour will explore the smaller footpaths, typically made from recycled woodchips, which take you through the Garden's woodlands and lesser-travelled areas.

As you enter the Garden from the Visitor Centre, take the ramp to your right and immediately turn left beside Livingstone Lake. Just past the wooden sculpture of two figures **1 - Confidence by Michael Dennis**, turn right onto a flagstone path that becomes a woodchip path into the Woodland Garden. Keep right to the **2 - coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)**, the tallest tree species in the world which can grow a foot each year. The tallest living tree in the world is named 'Hyperion', a coast redwood measuring 380 feet tall and 21 feet in diameter, in the heart of Redwood National and State Park in California. Because these trees are so tall, it is difficult for water to travel from the roots to the top of the tree, fighting gravity all the way. In the wild, coast redwoods only occur within 30 miles of the foggy coast of northern California, where up to 40% of their annual water intake is from coastal fog that condenses on the leaves and drips to the ground and roots below.

A few steps past the coast redwood, on the left, is a small, low-growing fern. The **3 – tating fern (*Athyrium filix-femina* 'Frizelliae')** got its name during Victorian times when tating was popular. Tating is a way of making lace by hand using a small shuttle, and the frilly edges of the fronds of this fern look as if they are edged with tatted lace. The Victorian craze for collecting ferns was dubbed "fern madness" and Victorians were such keen collectors that they pushed some rare species to the edge of extinction.

Leave the woodland down the sloping path and join the wide paved path which curves left around the R. Roy Forster Cypress Pond. Just before the floating wooden bridge, turn right onto the narrow path that circles the pond, past several **4 - bald or swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum*)**. Though conifers are typically evergreen, a few are deciduous and the bald cypress is one of them. Its feathery green needles are now turning orange and will soon be shed, which is why it is named 'bald' cypress. At the foot of the trees are knobby 'knees' (**pneumatophores**), projections of bald cypress roots. These can reach a height of eleven feet and research suggests they have a dual function – helping to support the tree by buttressing the trunk in wet, unstable soils, and aerating the roots of trees growing in swamps or along shorelines.

Continue around the pond until, on the left, you come to a tall tree on the water's edge. The **5 - dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)** is another deciduous conifer. It was first described from fossils and thought to be extinct until a dawn redwood was discovered growing in a forest in China in the 1940s. Opposite the dawn redwood is an **6 - American witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)**. Flowers, like small, untidy bundles of thin yellow ribbon, bloom in late fall after the leaves have dropped. A year after pollination, the fruit explosively ejects two or four black seeds over 30 feet from the bush. Witch hazel has medicinal properties and for hundreds of years the bark, twigs and leaves have been boiled and distilled to soothe skin conditions and heal wounds; today, it is still used in cosmetics, toothpaste and other products. Since the 19th century, most of the world's commercial supply of witch hazel has been produced in Connecticut, USA where brush is harvested from managed woodlots in fall and winter.

When the path stops at the floating bridge, turn right onto a gravel path that leads through the **Bamboo Collection** until you emerge at a grove of **7 - Giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)**, not the tallest but the largest tree in the world by mass. The current record holder is a tree in California's Sequoia National Park called General Sherman, 275 feet tall and estimated at over 2,500 years old. These juvenile (40 year old) trees are just 70 feet tall, so General Sherman is four times their height. Take a moment to step inside the cool, dark interior of the grove.

To the right of the giant sequoias, cross the lawn towards the bank of Heron Lake and follow the narrow path on the right, along the water's edge, through the **Japanese Maple Collection**. After their leaves of red, orange, pink and purple have fallen, their bare twisted branches form attractive silhouettes. With views

down the lake you might see a great blue heron standing perfectly still, one of 89 bird species recorded at VanDusen. Where this path joins the wide paved path, turn left and pass the **Maple Collection** to your left. Here you will find the **sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)** from which nearly all maple syrup is made. Canada supplies over 80% of the world's maple syrup, most of it produced in Quebec.

When the paved path divides and curves up to the left, keep straight ahead. The first tree on the right is an **8 - American larch (*Larix laricina*)**, another species of deciduous conifer which drops its needles. An alternate name for American larch is tamarack, from the Algonquin word *akemantak* which means wood used for snowshoes.

VanDusen is a botanical garden and over the years it has also become an open-air art gallery, an ideal setting for permanent installations and temporary exhibitions. Take the first woodland path on your left with the sign *Totem Poles* and the path that immediately forks to the right will lead you to the **9 - Transformation Plant**, a large stone sculpture created in 2012 by New Zealand artist Chris Booth. Fourteen granite slabs are supported by large pieces of western redcedar wood to resemble a flower that is just beginning to open. As the wood decays over the next thirty years or more, the stone 'petals' of the flower will gradually open.

Now the path curves left to **10 - two totem poles** standing on the bank of Forest Lake. The first, ***Al of The Gispudwada*** was carved in 1976 by Art Sterritt, recognized internationally for his work protecting the Great Bear Rain Forest. Earl Muldon carved the second totem pole, ***Mosquito***, in 1986 and was awarded the Order of Canada in 2011 for his cultural contributions. Cross the small bridge of flat stones and around the curve, set back from the path on the right, stands a metal sculpture, **11 - *The Last of the Giants*** by Janice Woode and Steve Paterson. It depicts an era when lumberjacks took several days to cut down one enormous old growth tree with their axes.

Join the wide paved path and across on the corner of the lawn is a large **12 - Western redcedar**, planted in 1911. It is not a true cedar at all but ***Thuja plicata***, a conifer belonging to the Cypress Family. Western redcedar is the official tree of British Columbia and has played a central role in the culture of the coastal First Nations for thousands of years. Canoes, totem poles, ceremonial masks, baskets, implements, textiles and much more are made from the wood, bark, roots and branches. Wide views open up on each side of the paved path to the left of the Western redcedar. On the right is the **Mountain Ash or Rowan Collection (*Sorbus species*)**, and the **Ash Collection (*Fraxinus species*)**, the trees laden with bunches of red, orange and yellow berries. Beyond these trees is the Great Lawn, once the sweeping fairways of the golf course that was originally on this site. In a gap on the left you may catch a glimpse of the Coast Mountains in the distance.

Further along the path, on your left is **Heather Pond** and the **Heather Garden**, which represents a typical Scottish moorland with heather, heath, Scots pine and silver birch. Just before the **Perennial Garden**, turn left where four paths meet. Soon, on the left is a narrow path to a secluded bench, one of the more than 100 benches placed around the Garden to provide pleasant views and quiet places to sit. Nearby is a **13 - Himalayan pine (*Pinus wallichiana*)**, with branches overhanging the path. In the same way that sugar maples are tapped for their sap to make maple syrup, Himalayan pines are tapped for their resin, which is distilled to produce high-quality turpentine. When turpentine is removed from distilled resin, what remains is rosin, an ingredient in such products as varnishes, medicines, foods and chewing gum.

A stone arch frames the **Formal Rose Garden**, laid out in a pattern inspired by the gardens of Versailles in France. Go down the steps and turn left, then down more steps and follow the paved path curving left to the **Black Garden**. The 'black' plants are actually deep red, burgundy or purple-pigmented plants, striking with the contrasting plants chosen for their bright yellow and gold foliage. Near the end of the Black Garden, climb the stone steps on your right and follow the woodland path through a green tunnel of branches. The next view is of Livingstone Lake on your left, just one of many places in the Garden where visitors can enjoy the sight and sound of water. Behind one of the benches along this path is a **14 - mountain ash (*Sorbus hupehensis* 'Pink Pagoda')**, at its best in October with grey-green leaves and bright pink berries that last into winter and are eaten by robins and thrushes.

The path continues through the **Ornamental Grasses**, an example of xeriscaping (from the Greek word 'xeros' meaning 'dry'), or landscaping for dry climates. Vancouver has a sub-humid Mediterranean climate and though it is known for rain, there can be drought in summer. A garden of grasses thrives in hot weather and needs little attention, and the different textures and colours of the grasses are particularly attractive when blowing in a breeze. This is the end of the tour so turn left over the wooden bridge to return to the plaza or turn right to find more woodland paths in the upper part of the Garden.