

VBGA CLIPPINGS

WINTER 2017

Photo: Tania Alexis Clarke



DONOR & VOLUNTEER PROFILE ERICA DUNN: AN INSPIRATION

By Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

Erica Dunn is one of VanDusen Botanical Garden's pioneer volunteers. Fittingly, she was raised a stone's throw from famed Sissinghurst Garden in Kent, a county known as the "Garden of England." Being given a small plot of land to tend in the family's large garden ignited a lifelong passion in young Erica. Recalling "a gentler time when people had the leisure to politely tour each other's gardens," Erica remembers precociously supplying botanical names while conducting tours of the family garden for her parents' friends.

At 93, Erica inspires us with her wit, charm and youthful spirit. She believes that having fun has been the key to the success of the guides ever since Curator Roy Forster put out the call for interpreters for the Garden's opening day in a 1974 Vancouver Courier newspaper article. Erica notes it was not all fun and games, especially when Roy's guide classes included daunting botanical exams.

Erica remembers that the guides were not supplied with an official tour route on opening day, August 30, 1975, and improvised. At their Thursday meetings the guides adopted the African-American expression of "each one, teach one." When one person learns something it becomes their duty to pass on their learning to another person. This cooperation was the genesis of a book of shared guide information culminating in Erica's comprehensive compendium, "Guiding at VanDusen: How it All Began" (1973 to 1995). Erica's other accomplishments included helping develop the Garden's popular plant sales and being bilingual, developing French materials and training French guides.

According to Erica, opening day was a joyous occasion with masses of people and dignitaries including the Garden's namesake, Whitford J. VanDusen, a "lovely shy man who had done so much work to make the Garden happen." In spite of a lot of groundwork, some visitors bridled at the entrance fee claiming that all there was to see were "weeds, small lakes and trees." The guides exercised diplomacy, responding that gardens need time to grow. The guides also learned that they needed to assess their audience and individualize their tours, a practice that is still employed today.

Erica came to the Garden with a lifetime of experience. She trained as a nurse during World War II at London's St. Thomas Hospital that was forced underground during bombing. Post-war she worked in Geneva, Paris, New York and Montreal. Erica laughingly tells of embarking on a global search for a husband and being halted in her tracks when she found her husband, Dr. Henry Dunn, a pediatric neurologist at Vancouver General Hospital during the 1950s polio epidemic.

Now legally blind, Erica still visits the Garden for companionship and "to listen and to feel" the plants. Monthly, she meets with a friend at the Garden and gives her samples of plants to sniff, feel and identify. According to Erica, "the guides are as old as the Garden is, one could say they are as young as the Garden." Erica is living proof of this.

INSIDE:
Membership Corner
Education through the year
Seed Collectors - 35 years
Staff news
...and more



MEMBER CORNER

Keep apprised of all benefits for VBGA Members!
Go to vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership.
Any questions, please contact the Membership Office.



Member Mornings at VanDusen Garden

We hope everyone enjoyed the early open hours on Sundays during the summer season. We will start again in May 2018.



Gift Certificates for Membership are lovely gifts for birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions for that special someone or family! Purchase at the VanDusen Garden Information Desk between 10 am – 3 pm daily or over the phone at 604.257.8675 Monday to Friday.



Monthly Member News

Discover something new every month and every season! Are you receiving our monthly Member News by email? If not and you wish to receive, or wish to change how you receive correspondence, please call the Membership Office at 604.257.8675 or email membership@vandusen.org with your email address. Emailed Member News include up-to-date information on exclusive Member events, and other garden activities and programs.



Vancouver's Must See Attractions

As a VBGA Member you are eligible for discounts and savings at Vancouver's top attractions. View the updated list of all attractions and discounts at vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership. Click on the Benefits page. Any questions, please contact the Membership Office.



Festival of Lights (FOL) – Member Discount

Discounted tickets can be purchased in the following ways:

1. In Person from the VanDusen Botanical Garden Admission Desk 10 am- 3 pm (the hard copy tickets are not dated which means you can choose any day of the Festival to attend). Present valid membership card to receive discounted rates. Upon arrival at the Festival, enter the line indicating Advance Ticket/Member line and show tickets and valid VBGA membership card.

2. Buy online and skip the line!

Purchase your tickets at vandusenfestivaloflights.ca. Select the member rates. Upon arrival at the Festival, enter the line indicating Advance Ticket/Member line, present the e-tickets and valid VBGA photo membership card. Service fees apply and online tickets are for a specific date.

3. At the gate during the Festival from 4:30pm nightly until 30 minutes prior to closing. Members must present valid VBGA membership card for discounted rates.

To ensure you arrive at the gate with valid membership cards including current expiry stickers, we encourage you to renew your membership prior to attending the event. Renew at either VanDusen Botanical Gardens or Bloedel Conservatory 7 days a week during regular open hours. We recommend not to wait until the evening event to renew your membership.

We are very grateful for your support as a Member. On behalf of the Volunteer and Staff Membership Team, we wish you a very Happy Holiday Season with peace and best wishes into 2018.

NOTES ON VANDUSEN GARDEN GEOLOGY

from the Yosef Wosk Library & Resource Centre files

When the Garden was being developed in the early 1970s, many clam and snail shells and other remnants of marine life were discovered on the grounds. These were not, as many thought, brought to the site by birds or people. Rather, they were the remains of sea life that had lived 12,000 to 14,000 years ago on or just below the seafloor as ice age glaciers retreated from the area. When these animals died, their shells were preserved in mud and sand that had accumulated on the seafloor. The marine sediments and their entombed fossils were later elevated above sea level as the land rose due to the departure of the ice that had been loading the crust. They were then left high and dry, far from the present shore.

In the Meconopsis Dell that is situated north of the Sino-Himalayan Garden on the naturalized slope of the old Point Grey Reservoir (built in 1911-1912), there is a simulated dry stream bed that forms a path through the Dell. Among the rocks found when the area was cleared is a 5 ft. wide boulder that is located behind a dedicatory plaque for Mrs. Gordon T. Southam (Jean MacMillan Southam), a well-known philanthropist who generously supported the Garden. This stone is a "glacial erratic," a piece of rock that differs from the size and type of rock native to the area in which it rests, that was deposited on the site by a receding glacier.

The Heather Garden is home to another ancient stone feature. When one enters from its eastern end, one passes through the Grotto - a dark passageway lined by black volcanic basalt boulders and covered by greenery. Careful inspection reveals that this basalt has many little stones embedded within it. As hot lava from local volcanic activity flowed over the region about 30 million years ago, it covered the small stones in its path. Once the lava cooled, the resulting basalt rock had the stones visibly embedded within it. The basalt boulders in the Heather Garden were originally collected near the eastern end of False Creek when the area was excavated for development in the 1970s. 🍃

VOLUNTEER GROUP PROFILE: VANDUSEN SEED COLLECTORS

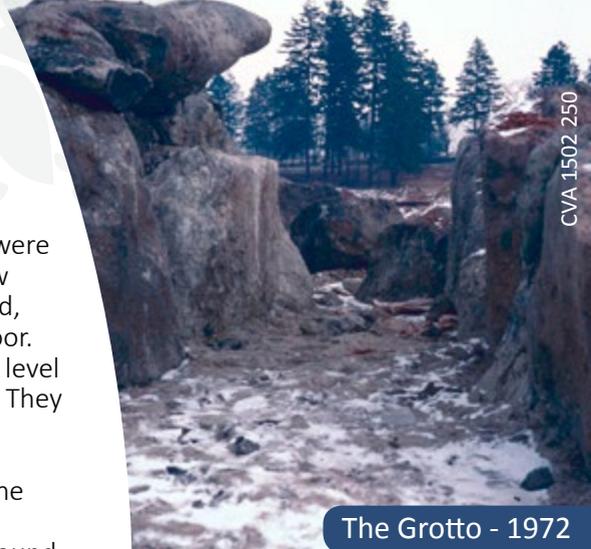
By Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

The spirit that, "Every flower of every tomorrow are in the seeds of today" is embodied by VanDusen Botanical Garden's volunteer Seed Collectors, who are celebrating their 35th Anniversary. Roy Forster, the Garden's first curator, germinated the idea of having Seed Collectors at the Garden. These days, the Seed Collectors follow a set of protocols established by the Garden's Curator of Collections, Cynthia Sayre. These guidelines specify how the plant materials are harvested, cleaned and organized.

This dedicated group meets twice a week in the Education Centre where a unique seed collection is housed. As John Shinnick, Tuesday's Chair, expressed, "Its focus is seeds of plants growing within the confines of VanDusen. Of note is our collection of native plant seeds."

The distribution of seeds to the public through sales online, in the Garden Shop and at Garden events like Seedy Saturday and the Plant Sale ensures these seeds are available to gardeners locally and further afield.

The Sunday group packages and prepares seed for sales and fulfills online orders. These seed sales give home gardeners the opportunity to grow rare plants not available at local garden centres or in seed catalogues. Liz Gosselin, Sunday Co-Chair (with Verna Semotuk) noted that with the exception of the U.S., "We get to share the Garden around the world." Requests for seeds come from countries such as, Russia, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom and France. Laughter and fun abounds within the Seed Collectors, as Liz notes, "If you're looking for a peaceful place to reconnect to nature on a weekly basis, and to learn about plants, trees, and the Garden, this is the group to join. And there are amazing bakers in this group. It's not all about the seeds." Thanks to the Seed Collectors from tiny seeds comes great growth. 🍃



The Grotto - 1972



Photo: Susan Mawhood

The Grotto - present day



Seed Collectors at work



EDUCATION THROUGH THE YEAR, AND THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN 12 HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: CLAIRE SMITH

This winter, one of our long-time Adult Education instructors, Claire Smith will be moving on to new adventures away from Vancouver after teaching her final course with us in November. Over the years, her personable, enthusiastic nature and impressive knowledge have kept students coming back to her fresh and engaging course offerings.

Claire first began teaching at VanDusen in the fields of horticulture and gardening, particularly with vegetables. She eventually expanded her topics into the fascinating world of food nutrition and the history of plant use, a niche that has been very well received at the Garden with courses such as Creations from the Apothecaries' Garden, Culinary Herbs that Changed the World, and Herbs for Health, to name but a few.

As an educator, nutritionist, cook, gardener and traveler, Claire has so much to offer the gardening and wellness community and does so with gusto through engaging in advocating for sustainable agriculture, healthy soils, healthy living and preserving our culinary and agricultural heritage. Through her own consulting business, Foodsmith, Claire helps people and gardens on their path to optimal health through both nutritional and food production counseling and guest lectures.

Claire's passion, expertise and ability to inspire students to take an active role in connecting to nature and plants will be truly missed at the Garden. We sincerely wish her all the best in her endeavours! 🌿

JANUARY – the Education Department was restructured and expanded, with Tania Clarke becoming the Adult Education/Communication Coordinator, Natalie Gray the Field Trip Coordinator, and an opening for a Youth Programs Coordinator.

FEBRUARY – The *Connecting Urban Youth to Nature* program was launched, and teachers were quick to sign up students to participate at the Garden.

MARCH – Spring Break day camps were full with kids counting the corpses in the pitcher plants, painting in the rain, searching for fairy's favourite tiny plants, and exploring living fossils in the Garden.

APRIL – Chantal Martin joined the Education team as Youth Programs Coordinator.

MAY – The VBGA celebrated Vancouver Bird Week, with plenty of classes, walks, and activities at the Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.

JUNE – *Pollinator Days* doubled, with more activities for elementary school students, and more community partners participating. This initiative began last year with three-year funding with the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

JULY – Summer campers always love working in the Veggie Garden, harvesting, washing and packing the produce for the Food Bank. This year, they learned about gardening with Parks Board summer staff member, Camil, who also runs Inner City Farm.

AUGUST – Hosted the First Annual Teacher Open House with 80 teachers attending to learn about the different programs the VBGA offers teachers and their students.

SEPTEMBER – Expanded training for volunteer school program leaders included management of groups of children, interpretation skills, and program adaptations to be more inclusive for children with special needs.

OCTOBER – On the Pro-D day for public schools, two different professional development workshops were hosted for teachers, as well as a day camp for 20 kids. It was a busy day!

NOVEMBER – What do you want to learn or do at the Garden? We're asking you, your friends and family, and the community what types of Adult Education you wish to participate in at the Garden. See the Member News email for the link to complete the 5-minute survey- it will be open until December 31st.

DECEMBER – Photography fans attended a unique photography workshop, using the Festival of Lights for inspiration. Over 100 Adult Education courses were offered in 2017. 🌿



VBGA Education clockwise from left: Chigiri-e Paper Art; Teacher Open House; Pollinator Days; Summer Camp



Photo: Malcolm Hunter, Volunteer Bloedel Docent

Branches of the Bunya-Bunya in the Conservatory

PLANT FEATURE: BUNYA-BUNYA PINE

(Araucaria bidwillii)

Contributed by volunteer Bloedel Docent, Malcolm Hunter

The Bunya-Bunya pine is an ancient tree dating back to the time of the dinosaurs. Despite its name, it is not a pine – it is in the same family as the monkey puzzle tree. To add confusion, the Latin name of this Australian tree is from the name of the tribe that lives in Chile, where the monkey puzzle grows, and the name of the Englishman, John Carne Bidwill, who took the first living Bunya-Bunya pine to England in the 1840's. The trees grow in the Bunya Mountains in Queensland. Their huge seeds, up to 500 times the size of pine nuts, were a food source for indigenous Australians. The Bunya feasts were of great local importance¹:

“Special envoys carrying message sticks from custodians of the trees travelled through surrounding districts to invite selected groups to attend the ceremonial feasts. ... They were times of great spiritual significance, when Aboriginal people gathered to receive strength from Mother Earth. They were also times for arranging marriages, settling disputes and for trading goods and sharing dances and songs. ... Aboriginal people considered the Bunya pine to be sacred, and there is scant evidence that they used parts

of the tree other than the edible nuts. Curr mentions, that the headman of the Kaiabara tribe wore an armband made of bunya fibre as a mark of office and Meston states that the bark of dead trees was used as a fuel. Symons and Symons also mention that the gum and roots were a food source. The roots were peeled before being roasted. ... Custodians collected the nuts by climbing the trees and knocking off the cones with a stick or stone tomahawk.”

The first European to see this tree was Andrew Petrie (1798-1872) who discovered it in 1838. In Queensland, it was first called *Pinus petrieana*². In 1842, Bidwill (1815-1853) published an account of this ‘new’ species of Araucaria. He took some to England and in 1843 an *Araucaria bidwillii* was sold in auction for 20 guineas- this is at least C\$3,400 in 2017 prices, arguably over ten times that.³ Bidwill died in March 1853, aged 38, never really recovering from 8 days of starvation after being lost in the Australian bush while surveying a road in April 1851.

The cones of the Bunya-Bunya pine are huge – bigger than a bowling ball. A falling one can kill, and trees in populated areas often carry warning signs.⁴

Family Resemblance

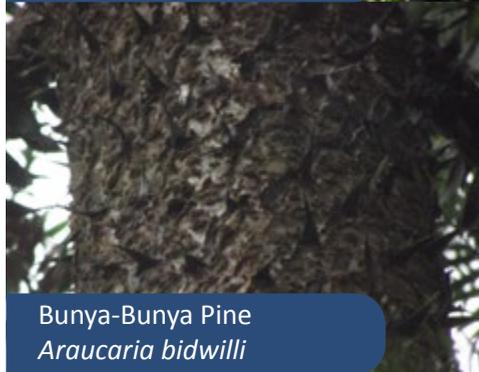
The four members of the Araucariaceae below all have leaves growing straight out of their trunks. True pines do not show this. There are monkey puzzle trees growing in Queen Elizabeth Park, down the road from the Bloedel Conservatory car park. The Conservatory has a Bunya-Bunya pine and several Norfolk Island pines. (Norfolk Island is between Australia and New Zealand.) The Wollemi pine was discovered in New South Wales in Australia in 1996. It was found in Wollemi Park by David Nobel, hence *Wollemi nobelis*. A potted Wollemi pine has been at the Conservatory from time to time and may return. During the summer, a Wollemi pine grows in the ‘Australia and New Zealand’ section of the Southern Hemisphere Garden at VanDusen Botanical Garden. This delicate plant is in a greenhouse over the winter. 🌿



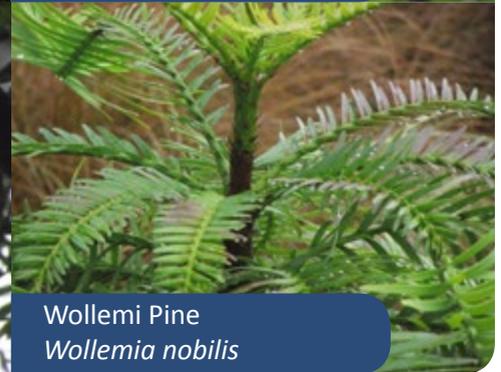
Monkey Puzzle Tree
Araucaria araucana



Norfolk Island Pine
Araucaria heterophylla



Bunya-Bunya Pine
Araucaria bidwillii



Wollemi Pine
Wollemia nobilis

1 http://www.conifers.org/ar/Araucaria_bidwillii.php

2 <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/emuwebnswlive/objects/common/webmedia.php?irn=55764&refable=ebibliography>

3 <https://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>

4 <https://permaculturenews.org/2013/11/27/the-bunya-bunya-pine-araucaria-bidwillii/>

GARDEN EVENTS & MORE

View all Garden events at vandusengarden.org

DECEMBER 2017 - FEBRUARY 2018 EVENTS

Some events charge admission.

Check vandusengarden.org for details and event updates!

2017 VanDusen Festival of Lights

December 1, 2017- January 7, 2018 (closed Dec. 25)
visit vandusenfestivaloflights.ca for tickets and hours.

Bird Walks

Sat. December 16, 10 am

Sat. January 27, 10 am

Sat. February 24, 10 am

Sat. March 24, 10 am

Meet in the Visitor Centre Atrium

free for members or with Garden admission

Medicine Wheel Ceremony

Sunday, December 17, 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Teacher Professional Development:

School Garden Ecology Workshop

Fri. February 23, 10 am- 3 pm

more details at vandusengarden.org/explore/events/#courses

NOTICE OF

VANCOUVER BOTANICAL GARDENS ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held on

MONDAY, APRIL 23RD, 2018, 7:30 - 9:30 pm

in the Visitor Centre, BMO Great Hall



Spring Break Camps 2018

March 19- 23 and 26- 29

Summer Camp 2018

Registration opens early
March- stay tuned!

Visit vandusengarden.org/learn/day-camps to learn more about our camps.

ADULT EDUCATION 2018

We're busy developing our March- August semester of courses. In the meantime, be sure to check our winter offerings in January and February on our website or current brochure.

Upcoming courses include:

- Jan. 19: Drawing Vegetables
- Jan. 24 & 31: Essentials of Landscape Design
- Feb 10: Drawing Birds in the Conservatory
- Feb 17: Creative Photography: Tropical Textures
- ...plus more fitness, yoga, gardening and art classes...



SAVE THE DATE: VANDUSEN PLANT SALE

Sunday, April 29, 2018

10 am - 4 pm

Free Admission to the Sale, thousands of plants for sale.

Our annual sale at VanDusen Botanical Garden. All proceeds go to the VBGA in support of its Education programs. Check our website's event listing closer to the date for the Plant Sale Catalogue.

STAFF NEWS

In early October, Shawn Mitchell, VBGA Executive Director since 2013, left the VBGA to pursue other opportunities. In his four and one-half years with the VBGA, Shawn made many contributions: the Board's governance role is more defined and focused, staff operations and priorities are clearly framed and coordinated, there is a strengthened working relationship with our volunteer community, and, we have clear objectives and metrics to measure the Association's work. We are indebted to Shawn for his leadership, hard work and many achievements. While our recruiter and the Board of Directors are working to find a new Executive Director, Gillian Drake, our long-time Education Director, is the Acting Executive Director. We hope to have the new Executive Director at the helm by early 2018.

GET IN TOUCH

Full staff directory at:

vandusengarden.org/plan-your-visit/contact-us

Membership 604.257.8675 | membership@vandusen.org

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