

VBGA CLIPPINGS

SPRING 2018

Photo: Tania Alexis-Clarke

VANDUSEN'S NEW BACKYARD BIRD GARDEN

by Natalie Gray

Birds bring life, colour, and beauty to the backyards and green spaces of Vancouver – from animated Black-capped Chickadees to striking Spotted Towhees, a neighbourhood wouldn't be the same without them.

As indicators of a healthy environment, birds provide critical ecosystem services, such as dispersing seeds, pollinating, and regulating insect populations. Birds also connect us to the natural world with their vibrancy, and highlight the close relationship between people, plants and animals. Even though Vancouver is a bustling city, over 250 species of migratory, overwintering, and resident birds use the urban landscape in some form, and 85 species have been spotted at VanDusen Garden alone!

Officially opened this March, VanDusen's new Backyard Bird Garden demonstrates how to transform any garden space, from the tiniest deck to the biggest backyard, into an oasis for birds. Attracting and supporting a diversity of birds is easy; simply select plant species that provide food, shelter, structure, or nesting habitat. This demonstration garden features appropriate plants, bird feeding stations, water sources, and a sunny yellow birdhouse that is just the right size for young visitors to explore. Within days of installation, the new feeders were alive with dozens of songbirds, and delighted visitors marveled at the lively display.

Developed in partnership between the VBGA and Vancouver Park Board, this new space is a platform for education and awareness, all while incorporating the City of Vancouver's Bird Strategy objectives to support habitat, reduce threats, and enhance access to green spaces. This exciting new feature has already been integrated into activities and themes for Spring Break and Summer Camps for kids, and a new Citizen Science initiative designed for high school students will focus on the resources in the area.

Whether you are a seasoned bird watcher, or simply mildly curious, VanDusen Garden has engaging opportunities to connect you with local birds. Participate in an Adult Education course, join dedicated volunteer Jeremy Gordon on his monthly bird walk (read his profile in the Education section), visit during the Vancouver International Bird Festival, or bring your family to the Garden to do your own bird spying. Finally, VanDusen Garden is also in the midst of planting the new "BC Bird Habitat". Surrounding the old Education Center, this installation includes a fantastic collection of native plants intended to further support local birds.

The next time you find yourself in one of Vancouver's beautiful parks or natural spaces, take a seat and close your eyes. Tune in to the diversity of life surrounding you and you'll never think of the urban landscape in the same way again!



Photos by Cynthia Sayre

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The city of Vancouver is hosting the prestigious International Ornithological Congress (I.O.C) this August, where over 2,000 scientists will land to celebrate all things birds. Visit VanDusen Garden during the event, where a number of engaging I.O.C events will be available to visitors. What better time to become a "bird nerd"? To find out more, visit www.vandusengarden.org



NEW MANAGEMENT AT THE VBGA

by Richard Hankin, President
On behalf of the VBGA Board of Directors

As many of you already know, the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association has a new Executive Director. Stephen Shapiro started work with us on February 1st. I am pleased to welcome him and introduce him to you – in a moment or two!

Before telling you more about Stephen I want to give a few words of thanks to Shawn Mitchell. Shawn joined us as Executive Director in May 2013 - the VBGA had been without an ED for a number of years. And the weaknesses of part-time, volunteer Board management showed. He left us in October 2017 in much better shape financially, in staff organization, in Board governance, and focussed on long term objectives for growth and enhancement of the services VBGA volunteers and staff provide at VanDusen and Bloedel Conservatory. The Trial Lawyers Assoc. of B.C. is fortunate to have him (can we sue for theft?!)

Gillian Drake served as Acting ED for four months after Shawn left. Gillian remained the same sunny, innovative and effective person you all know, despite a huge work load in addition to her Director of Education responsibilities. She faced a number of complex issues successfully and cheerfully. The VBGA Board thanks her sincerely, for all of the above reasons. Similarly – as Gillian would very much want – I recognize the other VBGA staff members who went out of their way to encourage and support Gillian and to keep VBGA programs running

smoothly. A motivated and cohesive staff is worth its weight in gold. Thank you.


Now, back to Stephen. You may think our ED selection process is a simple one. We hire an Executive search firm. It canvases the market, narrows down a small list of ED candidates, we interview three or four, select one, check references and appoint! Job Done! No way. We make them suffer (so to speak). Each of our shortlist goes through two interviews, each lasting about 1.5 hours. In between, each candidate meets with the senior VBGA staff team and with the Park Board Garden Director. We had hoped Ema Tanaka, Business Team Lead, could also take part in the latter meetings, but Festival of Lights preparations were too demanding. At the second meeting we look for insights and questions each candidate has identified from these meetings, as well as any feedback from VBGA and Garden staff. We are diligent in seeking the best possible ED candidate.

We followed this process with both Shawn and Stephen. In each case a 'star' candidate emerged that we could confidently appoint Executive Director. Hence, Stephen brings a huge and diverse resume of experience and proven performance. A few examples:

- Executive Asst. to Alberta Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism
- Marketing and Development Mgr., Alberta Ballet
- Manager of Development, Healthy Communities, Calgary Health Trust
- Director of Development, Leadership Gifts and President's Circle, UBC Development Office
- Associate Vice-President, Global Development and Principal Gifts, University of Alberta
- President and Chief Executive Officer, St. Paul's Hospital Foundation
- Associate Vice-President, Advancement, and Senior Executive Director Global and Regional Development, University of Waterloo

To sum up, Stephen has held a number of marketing, policy, fund-raising and management positions – in cultural,

governmental, educational, health and university fields. He has served and continues with a number of non-profit boards. He wants to be instrumental in helping the VBGA build on its successes; to expand on joint projects with Vancouver Park Board; to act on the opportunities increased population density and environmental pressures present; and to realize the potential benefits VanDusen and Bloedel offer.

The VBGA Board of Directors is enthusiastic with Stephen's acceptance of the Executive Director role. We hope all volunteers and members will be able to meet him in the near future if you have not already done so. 

Growing the Garden and the Conservatory

Like to get involved in garden matters? Consider nominating someone (you?) for The VBGA Board of Directors.

Nominations close at 4 pm, Friday, March 23, 2018.

Details and nomination forms available at the VBGA office during regular business hours. Or contact leelaxton.vandusen@gmail.com

NOTICE OF AGM & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT

Reception for Volunteer Recognition Awards begins at 7:00 PM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association be held in the Visitor Centre at VanDusen Botanical Garden, 5151 Oak Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, on **April 16, 2018 at 7:30 pm** for the purpose of:

- (a) presenting Volunteer Recognition Awards,
- (b) considering the financial statements of the Association for the year ended December 31, 2017,
- (c) considering the report of the Board of Governors to the Association,
- (d) electing Governors,
- (e) appointing an auditor,
- (f) authorizing the Board of Governors to fix the remuneration of the auditor,
- (g) considering and, if thought fit, passing special resolutions for which proper notice has been given, and
- (h) transacting such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

NEW YEAR – NEW EXPANDED PROGRAMMING AND HOURS!

at the Yosef Wosk Library & Resource Centre files

Open House and Lecture

The Great Book(s) of Nature: The Origins and Treasures of Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring Garden Library with Spencer W. Stuart
Saturday, March 24 at 2 pm | Free

Rachel Lambert Mellon (1910 - 2014), often known as Bunny Mellon, was an American horticulturalist, gardener, philanthropist, and art collector. She designed and planted several significant gardens, including the White House Rose Garden. Over 80 years, she assembled one of the most comprehensive botanical and horticultural book collections in private hands, and in 1981 the Oak Springs Garden Library was founded on her estate in Virginia.

Join Art and Collections Historian, Spencer W. Stuart, for a presentation and discussion of the earliest treasures from her collection. The lecture will focus on French and English publications from the late 17th century publications that offer early examples of horticulture during a period of dynamic learning, debate and public interest in the development and maintenance of gardens.

Spencer W. Stuart holds a Masters in the History of Art from the Courtauld Institute, UK, and received the Director's Award upon his completion of the degree. He has worked with Bonhams Auctioneers, focusing on Rare Books and Manuscripts in both Toronto and New York. He resides in Vancouver, where he operates a collection management practice.

This event will be followed by a tour of the library's collections, its current Roberta Mickelson Gallery art exhibition, and information about current and upcoming programs.

LONGER LIBRARY HOURS

Monday to Friday, 9:30 am - 4:15 pm
Saturday, 11 am - 2 pm
Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm

AND MUCH MORE

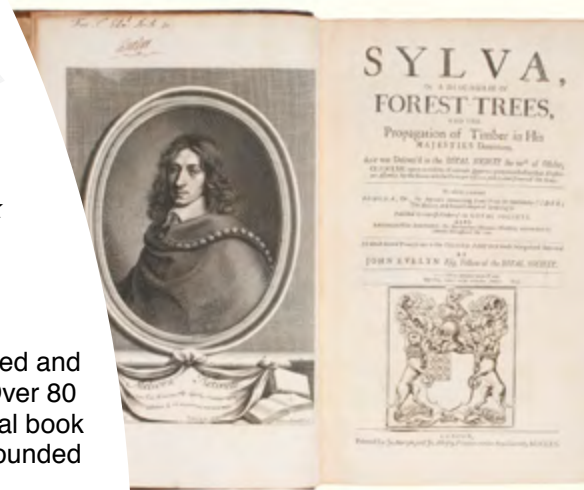
Visit vandusengarden.org/learn/library for information on all our programs and resources.

DRIED FLOWER ARRANGERS - PRESSED IN MEMORY

by Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

Flowers burst into bloom, and all too soon fade away. As VanDusen Botanical Garden bids farewell to the volunteer Dried Flower Arrangers (DFA) we remember their creative work that carried spring and summer's vibrancy on into the winter months. The Dried Flower Arrangers have been a perennial presence in the Garden since the 1980s, when the Garden Guides formed new volunteer groups. Meeting Wednesday mornings, the DFA viewed itself as a "quiet presence", but their colourful floral plot in the Garden made quite a statement. DFA member Judy Howard noted, "it was enjoyed by visitors to the Garden, especially photographers, because of its emphasis on flowers," and "people with small gardens found inspiring examples of what they could grow." Others were curious about how to dry flowers.

Drying flowers was not a simple process and began each year when leaves were long since fallen off the trees. The group's lead, Debby Stagg, described, "purchasing seeds, setting the sowing schedule, working with Garden Propagator Bruce McDonald and our volunteers in the greenhouse, and getting our seedlings into the Garden." Maintenance was a group effort, "replenishing beds and paths and weeding, always weeding. We all enjoyed the time of harvesting, drying and creating." ...continued next page



From the Mellon Estate's collection



Mellon in 1982



The DFA team creating holiday arrangements



Results of the time and talent contributed



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DFA members brought their talents. Lynn Bagnell, who retired from a garden centre enjoyed “the seeding, cutting and collecting of greens.” Judy, a Master Gardener, stated that it “is [in] my genes” recalling her grandmother’s dried flower and shell arrangements. This type of craft reached a height in Victorian times, but the use of flowers to preserve memories is thought to be ancient in origin.

Shared talents included a cross-cultural sense of beauty, as Judy expressed, “It was a mixed group with lots of ethnicities such as Russian, Iranian, and Chinese. It was an entry point for newcomers with limited English into other volunteer activities in the Garden. People brought their cultural perspectives – use of different colours [and] adornments [which] enhanced traditional flower arrangements.” Flower arranging has worldwide roots including Japan’s art of Ikebana.



The Dried Flower Arrangers wound down with characteristic generosity. They held successful sales three times a year and their last sale featuring Christmas decorations, greenery, and more, produced their largest ever donation to the VBGA. The DFA generously offered desirable perennials such Astilbe, peony, Centaurea, boxwood and curly willow to the Potluck Section of the VBGA Plant sale. The group looks forward to seeing the metamorphosis from DFA Garden to a new teaching garden hosting camps, classes and more.

The VBGA wishes to thank the dedicated DFA volunteers for their valuable contribution of time and talents to the Garden. Their dedication and artistry will remain pressed in our memories. Volunteers truly are the heart of our success and we look forward to continuing to work with these committed individuals in new roles. 🌱



THE GREENING OF COMMUNITY – THE VANDUSEN PLANT SALE

by Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

Audrey Hepburn mused, “To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” The VanDusen Plant Sale’s theme for 2018, “40 Years of Connecting People and Plants,” celebrates an event that has made green tomorrows possible for many. Actually, it is the only annual event where free admission gives VanDusen Botanical Garden an opportunity to share its green oasis with everyone.

The Plant Sale is about community. As the longest running volunteer-driven event at the Garden it has facilitated enduring friendships. Volunteers are loyal; many ex-Vancouverites trek in from places as far away as Vancouver Island or the Interior on sale day, drawn by a common interest spurred on by an enticing catalogue offering perennials, geraniums, succulents, fuchsias, roses, rhododendrons, vines, herbs, trees, shrubs, native plants and orchids. Equally important, the aptly named, “Potluck” category is full of surprising plants donated or nurtured by volunteers called “Potluckers” in their home gardens or in a special plot at VanDusen. On sale day a line-up worthy of a rock concert begins to form at 7 am for a 10 am opening. The wait is made pleasant by a sense of kinship and creature comforts from home such as picnic baskets and folding chairs. During the sale, congenial and informed advice is offered by volunteers; some are Master Gardeners and most have extensive knowledge. These chats enhance the feeling of “good neighbours.” The Seed Collectors as well as vendors offering plant-related material are also on hand.

The first Plant Sale was held in April 1978, chaired by Janet Fraser and Alix Brown. Annual themes from “Planting in Containers” to “Canada 150,” (highlighting red and white plants) have accompanied this event’s growth from humble beginnings in the Garden parking lot to the expanse of the Great Lawn. With the exception of shifting for Easter, the sale has never failed to miraculously materialize on the last Sunday in April. The event has weathered the weather, as Margie Knox, Potluck and 2018 Plant Sale Chair recalled, “In its forty years there has been every possible weather condition that Vancouver can provide from biting frost, to hot sun to pelting rain.” However, capricious weather is no match for hardy perennials including volunteers and customers!

Modern challenges have to be weathered including aging volunteers and stiff competition from big box stores that have greater buying power. To give a sense of the sale’s impact, in 2017 alone, the Plant Sale engaged approximately 400 volunteers and including the proceeds from the Soil, Compost and Manure Sale (held separately), the net profit resulted in \$50,000.00 being given to the VBGA for its many projects. The event has always been committed to three unwavering principles, as Margie expressed, “We build profile for the Garden, we supply desired plant material to the gardening public and we raise money to support the VBGA.” Margie described its environmental impact, “Historically, because of the VanDusen Botanical Garden’s plant sale, we have assisted in the greening of the Lower Mainland. You can’t sell 30-40,000 plants annually, many of which are perennials, trees, shrubs or long-term material without making an impact on our community.”

The VanDusen Plant Sale has a vision of a verdant tomorrow. It is captured by the sight of the excited throngs running in as it opens and the joyful expression on a child’s face as they eagerly clutch their first plant. 🌱



Clockwise, from left: Johnny, Madison and Sydney spend time with campers

MEET THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS

by Chantal Martin

Juggling academic and extracurricular demands in high school is no easy task. However, time-consuming schedules haven't stopped the next generation of environmental educators from seeking out volunteer opportunities with the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association. Meet Johnny Huang, Madison Dartana, and Sydney Lui - three enthusiastic students who all began volunteering with VanDusen's summer camps last year. Now, as we gear up for a fun-filled Spring Break, we are glad to announce that Johnny, Sydney, and Madison will all be joining us as Junior Counselors.

Johnny, who was looking for work experience, volunteered over 200 hours last summer, taking on leadership roles such as introducing the "Plant of the Day". His hard work paid off, and we were pleased to offer him a position as Junior Counselor for

our Fall Fun Pro-D camp in October 2017. Madison said, "I can't wait to continue to facilitate the discoveries that children make when they come to camp at VanDusen! VanDusen is a beautiful place to be, and there are so many amazing things to learn. I love to be in nature and to work with children, so it is a perfect fit for me!"

Sydney reports, "I enjoyed teaching the children about plants and ecosystems so I've decided to come back for the Spring Break camps. I'm also looking forward to learning more myself. The last time I volunteered, I learned a lot about my favourite tree, the ginkgo, and was completely fascinated. VanDusen has a huge diversity of plant species, so I'm very excited to be able to go back and explore the Garden once more."

You can catch these superstars teaching children all about wacky, weird, and ancient plants, birds, rainforests, cloud science, and fairies from March 19 - 29. To learn more about our upcoming Spring Break camps, or to register please visit: vandusengarden.org/learn/day-camps.

INSTRUCTOR & VOLUNTEER PROFILE: JEREMY GORDON

by Tania Clarke

About 20 years ago, Jeremy Gordon approached a staff member at the Garden with a proposal to start free bird walks. Since then, he has shared his knowledge and passion for birds with hundreds of visitors. In addition to his walks, he has been teaching *Introduction to Bird Watching* at the Garden since 2014.

Jeremy's interest in birding was ignited when a birder friend from Texas visited him in Vancouver. Jeremy was on crutches at the time, so while his friend went hiking, he borrowed his binoculars and quickly became hooked. Eventually, Jeremy visited his friend in Austin, Texas and joined a bird walk around the gardens at the State Capitol Building. It was this experience that inspired him to lead walks at VanDusen. Thanks to his past employment at Sprinklers Restaurant (now Shaughnessy), he was already quite familiar with the Garden and was able to arrange a trial run.

Jeremy loves all birds, but says it's always a thrill to see the Osprey when it stops by to catch a fish or two. The most unexpected bird he has seen at the Garden is an American Dipper - they're usually found in out-of-the-way, fast flowing streams rather than the middle of a city garden!

His go-to resource these days is the BC Bird Alert website, where he can check what rarity has flown in lately. If you're interested in getting more involved with the birding community Jeremy recommends the Nature Vancouver society is also a wonderful way to meet other birders and go on field trips.

POLLINATOR DAYS: JUNE 13 & 14, 2018

The Garden's show of spring flowers provides a perfect setting to explore pollinators and the habitats that support them. Pollinator Days, an annual multi-day event, hosts hundreds of elementary school students for an action-packed day of visiting educational activity stations set up around the Garden. Partnering with other organizations such as the Environmental Youth Alliance, the Honeybee Centre, and Border Free Bees, Pollinator Days provides students opportunities to identify the pollinators in their backyards, explore pollen up close, make connections between pollinators and food, practice citizen science, and become empowered to make a difference. To register your class for the event visit vandusengarden.org/events/pollinator-days.

We are so fortunate to have had Jeremy with us for all these years – and it's clear from the growing popularity of his walks that visitors really appreciate him too! Jeremy's walks continue through 2018, with the exception of July and August. *Introduction to Bird Watching* is being offered again on April 22nd. Check our events calendar on the back of this issue for dates.

MARCH - JUNE 2018 EVENTS

Some events charge admission.

Fin & Feathers - Paintings by Jo Scott-B on until Sunday, March 25 in the Discovery Room, VanDusen Visitor Centre

Bird Walks - Meet in the Visitor Centre Atrium at 10 am Free for members or with Garden admission Saturdays, March 3, 24, April 28, May 26, & June 23

Nature's stories for young children
Pre-school storytime in the Library
Wednesdays, Mar 28, Apr 25, May 23, June 27

Great A-Maze-Ing Egg Hunt
March 30, 31 and April 1, 4 sessions / day btw. 9 am - 1 pm visit vandusengarden.org for info

VanDusen Plant Sale | Sunday, April 29, 10 am - 4 pm

All British Field Meet - May 19
For more information please visit westerndriver.com

Medicine Wheel Ceremony
Sunday, June 24 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
...plus garden club events, sales & more at vandusengarden.org!



SAKURA DAYS JAPAN FAIR

Saturday, Apr 14
11 am - 7 pm

Sunday, Apr 15
11 am - 5 pm

Celebrate Japan and Sakura with your family and friends! Enjoy this memorable cultural event showcasing Japanese vendors, food, arts and crafts, and over 50 performances. The Cherry Stage features special guest performers from Japan, Tsugaru Shamisen musician Kohei Honda and world-renowned Japanese drum player, Keita Kanezashi. They will be performing a breathtaking performance of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's new original song, Cherry Blossoms For You & Me. This sing-along performance will conclude with the Japanese tradition of a Lantern Parade on Saturday for all to join. Plan ahead and come early. Be sure to reserve tickets to the highly popular sake tasting and traditional Japanese tea ceremony!

Member prices are available in person only, at VanDusen Garden's Admissions Desk beginning mid-March. Please remember to bring your valid VBGA membership card.

MEMBER CORNER

Member Mornings at VanDusen Garden are back! Mark your calendars!

Saturday, April 21	8 am - 10 am
Sunday, May 6	8 am - 9 am
Saturday, June 16	8 am - 9 am
Sunday, July 15	8 am - 9 am
Saturday, August 11	8 am - 9 am
September	TBA

Bring your camera, sketchbook, or novel, and enjoy VanDusen Garden before regular open hours. Rain or shine. Complimentary coffee offered. This is a Member Only event and Members must scan their valid membership card. Family and visitors will wait until regular opening hours to join the Member in the Garden.

Spring Break Family Membership Promotion

Saturday, March 17 - Monday, April 2.
Encourage your Family & Friends to become members today! Purchase a first time Family Membership during Spring Break and receive a \$10 discount.

Family Membership categories include Individual plus One Child, Family and Family Plus.

Must be purchased in person at VanDusen Garden or Bloedel Conservatory between March 17 and April 2. Go to vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership or visit the VanDusen Visitor Centre Membership Desk for more info.

Only applicable for families who have not purchased a family membership within the last 2 years. Applicable for individuals who upgrade to a Family Membership within the month of purchase/renewal. Discount not applicable for renewal of memberships (unless upgrading to a Family Membership) or combined with other discount promotions.

Shaughnessy Restaurant \$ 20 off Promo

Show a **valid VBGA photo membership card** before you order and you and your guest will **receive a \$20 discount off your second dinner** entree when ordering 2 or more dinner entrees. Maximum 2 offers per table, not valid on special days (e.g. Mother's day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving) and not valid during the month of December (Festival of Lights). This offer cannot be combined with other promotions or gift cards. Call 604-261-0011 for reservations.

