



Vancouver  
Botanical  
Gardens  
Association



Welcome to VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory. We thank you for volunteering your time and talents. The Garden and the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) recognize the importance of volunteers in assisting in our many programs and activities. This handbook outlines the mission and history of the Gardens as well as information about volunteer activities and procedures. At any time you are welcome to contact the Director, Volunteer Engagement at [hjakop@vandusen.org](mailto:hjakop@vandusen.org) 604-257-8674 with additional questions and she will be happy to assist you.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

A wide range of volunteer opportunities are available with the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association, both at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory. Over 1000 volunteers contribute their time and talents in education, visitor experience, special events, governance, administration, fundraising and special events. Volunteers are pivotal to our work and enhancing visitors' learning and engagement experience; contributing to our mandate to connect people to plants and help them understand their role in Earth's ecosystems. For current volunteer opportunities, please visit our website <http://vandusengarden.org/get-involved/volunteer/>.

The Gardens are jointly operated by the City of Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association, the city's charitable not-for-profit partner. Our two organizations have worked together for more than 40 years under a shared vision of making the Garden cherished locally and renowned internationally.

### **Purpose**

We are here to connect people to plants AND to work with Park Board in achieving our (shared) vision.

### **Vision**

To achieve our purpose, we want the Garden and the Conservatory to be cherished locally and renowned internationally.

### **Mission**

To engage people of all ages and walks of life in the importance of biodiversity to our lives, and to foster a lifelong love of plants and gardens by virtue of their participation in our programs and services.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Hours and Admission Rates

VanDusen Garden and Bloedel Conservatory is open to the public every day of the year except Christmas Day. Parts of the Garden may be closed due to special events. Garden hours and admission rates can be found on our website <http://vandusengarden.org/plan-your-visit/hours-admission/>

### Membership

Membership fees, categories and benefits information can be found on the VBGA website <http://vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership/>. Benefits as a member includes receipt of photo Membership Card, unlimited admission to VanDusen Garden and Bloedel Conservatory during regular open hours, discounted rates for special events and education programs including children's camps, receipt by email of monthly Member News, receipt by mail of VBGA Clippings Newsletter, discounted purchases at the VanDusen Garden Shop as well as at garden centres and attractions throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. All members with current membership are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

### Education Programs

Education programs with the VBGA aim to increase appreciation and understanding of the importance of plants to all life and foster environmental stewardship at the personal and community level. From *Nature's Stories for Young Children*, to wellness classes for seniors, opportunities are presented for learners of all ages. Field trips for school children, led by trained volunteers, support BC's education curriculum, while the very popular summer camp program engages kids in outdoor activities, lessons, gardening, games, crafts, and garden exploration. The adult continuing education programs offers 100+ classes, tours and workshops in horticulture, ecology, art and wellness.

### Contacts

VanDusen Botanical Garden, 5251 Oak Street	604.878.9274
Bloedel Conservatory, Off West 33rd Avenue, east of Cambie St., atop Queen Elizabeth Park	604-257-8584
VanDusen Administration Office	604.257.8666
Heidi Jakob, Director, Volunteer Engagement	604.257.8674 <a href="mailto:hjakop@vandusen.org">hjakop@vandusen.org</a>

### Emergency and Safety Procedures

As a VanDusen volunteer, we encourage you to be vigilant about inappropriate behaviour or activities in the Garden. However, we do not recommend confrontations with the public. If you notice any suspicious behaviour, please report it!

Monday to Friday: 9 am – 4:30 pm - Administration Office, 604.257.8666  
During regular Garden hours: Cashier/Garden Shop, 604.257.8665  
Weekdays: 4 pm to midnight - Weekends: 9 am to 5 pm: Security, 604.353.9398

### Emergency

**In case of serious injuries or illness, phone 911. Please report incident to staff and follow their direction.** A first aid box is located in the Visitor Centre at the cashier's desk. There is also one located in the Administration building in the copy room by the water dispenser.

# VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN



## **History**

This site was logged at the turn of the century and subsequently leased by the Shaughnessy Golf Club from 1911 until 1960 at which time, the CPR, owners of the site, proposed a subdivision. The VBGA was formed in 1966 by dedicated people who wanted to see a botanical garden created on the property. The land was purchased with shared funding from the City of Vancouver, the Government of British Columbia and the Vancouver Foundation through the generosity of W.J. VanDusen. Work started in 1971 and the Garden officially opened to the public on August 30, 1975.

## **Facilities**

### **The Garden**

The Garden has matured to international stature since opening in 1975. The mild Vancouver climate allows the cultivation of an outstanding plant collection over the 22 hectares (55 acres). It is a delight any time of year with over 7500 kinds of plants from around the world. The garden design features plant displays in attractive landscape settings. Specific plantings illustrate botanical relationships, such as the Rhododendron Walk, or geographical origins, as in the Mediterranean Garden. These areas are set amidst rolling lawns, tranquil lakes and dramatic rockwork with vistas of the mountains and city.

Walking tours are provided by trained volunteer garden guides and are free with the price of admission. Guide driven electric carts for visitors with limited walking ability are available from April to October. Self-guided walking tours are available throughout the year.

The Visitor Guide provides a map and walking routes as well as other information of interest to our visitors.

The "Plant Collection Records" is a list of all plants in the garden. It is available in the Volunteer Lounge and Library.

### **Education Centre**

The Education Centre was a forest interpretation centre from 1976 to 1986. The Education Centre currently houses the VanDusen volunteer Seed Collectors and Dried Flower Arrangers.

### **Administration Centre**

The Administration building contains Park Board Administration offices, the Cedar Room, Floral Hall, as well as the recently renovated space for VBGA offices including Administration Support, Volunteer Services, Education, Development and Membership departments.

### **Visitor Centre**

Located off of Oak Street, the Visitor Centre contains the VanDusen Garden Shop, Truffles Fine Foods Garden Café, the Discovery Room (Interpretation Room), the Education Classroom, Library, Volunteer Lounge, the Great Hall, and washrooms.

Wheelchairs are available for Garden use on a first served basis. Also, a wheelchair route map is available from the Cashier.

### **Garden Shop**

The Garden Shop specializes in quality products with a horticultural theme - books for the gardener, gift items, pottery, gardening tools, seeds and floral paper products. With membership to the Garden, volunteers receive a 10% discount on all items purchased (excluding sale items).

### **Truffles Fine Foods Garden Café**

The café offers Fair trade coffees, handcrafted hot and cold beverages, epicurean entrees, bistro favourites, and snacks – all freshly prepared on site from the highest quality ingredients.

### **Shaughnessy Restaurant**

This is a full-service restaurant, located at the top of the parking lot, and operated on a lease arrangement from the Vancouver Park Board.

### **Yosef Wosk Library and Resource Centre**

The VBG operates a specialized reference library. It receives many journals, newsletters, seed and nursery catalogues. The library has a collection of over 4,000 current and out-of-print gardening, horticulture, and botany books, including titles on plant hunting and exploration. The librarian and volunteers are available during library hours to offer assistance. Library hours can be found on our website

<http://vandusengarden.org/learn/library/>



### **History**

In 1966, while Canada prepared for its Centennial celebrations, two men in Vancouver had a grand vision. Stuart Lefaux, Superintendent of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and Deputy Superintendent Bill Livingston wanted to put a project through the Park Board that would enhance the image of Vancouver and give people something to be really excited about! Thanks to a significant contribution by lumber magnate Prentice Bloedel, the Bloedel Conservatory opened December 6th, 1969 and hosted over 500,000 visitors during its first year of operation.

The Bloedel Conservatory and Plaza development won the prestigious “Vincent Massey Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment” in 1972. In 1997 the Conservatory was given a “Class A” Heritage designation in recognition of its architectural contribution to the City as a structure of Primary Significance, representing the best example of a style or type of building.

### **Bloedel Conservatory**

The crowning glory of Queen Elizabeth Park is the Bloedel Conservatory, built in 1969 at the highest point in Vancouver at 501 ft (153m). The dome is 140 ft (43 m) in diameter and 70 ft (21 m) high at the apex. The Conservatory features three biomes within its expansive triodetic dome - the second largest structure of its kind in North America. Simulated rain forest, subtropic, and desert environments feature over 500 species of plants from the tropical regions of the world. More than 100 free-flying birds and parrots also make their home here, complemented by a waterfall and natural basalt rock pool teeming with Japanese "Koi" fish. Tropical plants include palms, bromeliads, orchids and the many other exotic plants from around the world. The Conservatory and the surrounding plaza were constructed through a very generous donation from Prentice Bloedel in 1969.

The City of Vancouver nearly lost the Bloedel Conservatory due to budget shortfalls in 2009. Local citizens formed a grassroots non-profit organization called the Friends of the Bloedel. They rallied public support and joined forces with the VanDusen Botanical Garden to submit a proposal to help operate and manage the Conservatory. This proposal was accepted by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in September 2010. Today the Bloedel Conservatory is managed jointly by VanDusen Botanical Garden and the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA).

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATIONS

### **Orientation**

All prospective volunteers are required to attend a general orientation, followed by an interview.

### **Training**

Specific courses are provided and required for Guides, School Program Leaders and Master Gardeners. All other groups receive role specific training for the volunteer opportunity they wish to pursue.

Volunteers receive a comprehensive orientation, program specific training as well as ongoing support and recognition.

### **Volunteer Recognition**

A recognition event is hosted annually by the VBGA to recognize the activities and support provided by volunteers to the Garden. As well, individual groups hold informal gatherings to recognize the contributions of volunteers to their activities.

### **Volunteer Lounge**

The Volunteer lounge located in the Visitor Centre is available to all volunteers for breaks and as an information centre.

### **Absences**

If you are unable to meet your volunteer obligation, please attempt to find a replacement for yourself with another member of your volunteer group and/or contact the volunteer or staff person to whom you report, or the Director, Volunteer Engagement.

### **Change of contact details**

Please notify the Director, Volunteer Engagement at 604-257-8674, by email at [hjakop@vandusen.org](mailto:hjakop@vandusen.org) of any changes to contact details or emergency contact.

### **Membership**

Volunteers participating in regular ongoing activities are required to belong to the VBGA.

### **Recording volunteer hours**

All volunteers are required to record and submit their volunteer hours. Volunteers will be eligible to a complementary adult course or lecture (space permitting) - for every 100 hours of documented volunteer activity. Volunteer hours are to be recorded by the volunteer in the Volunteer Hub, [myvolunteerpage.com](http://myvolunteerpage.com)

## **Problem-solving at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory**

The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) strives to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience; however, the Association recognizes that from time to time concerns, complaints and/or problems will arise.

Our approach is one that relies on respectful dialogue and individual accountability. We all want what's best for the Garden and Bloedel and what's best for the visitor.

The following process is intended to ensure issues that arise are resolved openly, fairly and quickly.

### **Volunteer issue with another volunteer**

A volunteer should seek to resolve problems directly with another volunteer, unless:

- a: The volunteer has already approached the other volunteer and the issue has not been resolved
- b: The volunteer feels the issue is too large or serious an issue to be discussed directly with the other volunteer (e.g. theft or intoxication)

If any of these situations apply, the volunteer should discuss the issue with his or her Group leader, staff supervisor or the Volunteer Engagement Director. If in the case of a), the situation remains unresolved, the Volunteer Engagement Director will consult with the Executive Director regarding the issue.

In the case of b) the Volunteer Engagement Director will take the issue directly to the Executive Director.

### **Volunteer issue with a VBGA employee**

A volunteer should seek to resolve his or her concern directly with the employee; unless:

- a: The volunteer has already approached the employee and the complaint has not been resolved
- b: The volunteer feels the complaint is too large or serious an issue to be discussed directly with the employee.

If any of these situations apply, the volunteer should discuss the situation with the Executive Director.

In the event that an issue cannot be informally resolved, and to the extent the issue conflicts with the mandate of the VBGA and the Garden, the Executive Director will pursue the following process<sup>1</sup>:

1. The first incident will be followed by an oral discussion with the volunteer and if applicable the Group leader. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to be heard. A verbal warning may be given by the Executive Director at his/her discretion.
2. A second incident will be addressed more formally, at the discretion of the Executive Director, with a written warning on behalf of the VBGA and could include contain time-bound objectives and criteria to help the volunteer address specific issues of concern.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: This process could apply to the escalation of a single issue, or be used as a way of addressing multiple issues over a given period of time.



3. A third incident will result in a cooling off period, whereby the volunteer's participation in volunteer activities are temporarily suspended for a period set at the discretion of the Executive Director. This will be communicated to the volunteer in person and followed up by a letter. The letter will be sent to the volunteer by registered mail within one week of the meeting.
4. Every step of the process will require complete documentation.
5. If a volunteer feels that they have been mistreated in this process, the volunteer can appeal in writing to the VBGA Board of Directors Human Resources Committee. Any decision of the Committee will be final.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) offers a comprehensive volunteer program that suits a variety of ages, interests and time availability. This includes:

- A wide-range of volunteer opportunities
- Orientation, role specific training, classes and/or workshops
- On-going support through peer and/or staff supervision, mentoring, feedback, and guidance
- Recognition informally throughout the year and through the VBGA's annual formal Recognition Program
- A respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for volunteers
- Access and time for weekday appointments with the Director, Volunteer Engagement

As a VBGA volunteer I acknowledge my responsibility and agree to the following:

- I will be a positive ambassador for the VBGA, its activities, and programs
- I will be courteous and respectful to my fellow volunteers, staff, and visitors
- I will fulfill my volunteer responsibilities and commitments and communicate properly if I am unable
- I will not engage in activities that create actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, nor will I accept monies, gifts or other dispensations for personal advantage.
- I acknowledge my responsibility and I will maintain confidentiality and privacy with respect to all VBGA information, whether it pertains to volunteers, members, donors, staff, business, or activities. I will securely maintain such information so that it is not visible, accessible or left unattended.
- I will act responsibly and ethically. I will take responsibility for my decisions and their consequences.
- I will abide by the policies and decisions adopted by the VBGA Board of Directors and of the Garden and not interfere with their application.

The VBGA reserves the right to revoke volunteer participation and privileges for any of the following reasons:

- Harassment in any form
- Insubordination
- Breach of confidentiality
- Theft
- Excessive, repeated absences
- Any other serious breach of the Code of Conduct

## VBGA Respectful Workplace Policy

This Respectful Workplace Policy has been adopted by the VBGA Board of Directors to ensure that all volunteers and staff are provided with a workplace that supports each individual's physical, psychological and well-being.

In a respectful workplace:

- volunteers and staff are valued
- communication is polite and courteous
- people are treated with respect
- conflict is addressed in a positive and respectful manner
- disrespectful behaviour and harassment are addressed immediately

### **What is harassment?**

Harassment is abusive and unwelcome behaviour or comments toward an individual. It can also be unwelcome sexual advances. The British Columbia Human Right Code prohibits harassment in employment and situations.

### **What are the benefits of a respectful workplace?**

Everyone deserves a respectful workplace. When people at work offend, embarrass or humiliate others, it hurts the recipient's dignity and well-being. It also damages working relationships and lowers productivity. Over time, disrespect in the workplace can lead to an unhealthy work environment resulting in a high rate of employee turnover.

### **Who is responsible for preventing disrespect?**

Everyone has responsibility for preventing disrespect.

**Source**            The person whose action offends others. If you think your behaviour offends someone else or if you are informed that your behaviour offends, stop the behaviour.

**Target**            Tell someone if their behaviour offends you. Ask them to stop. Give a respectful response and avoid blaming. If the behaviour continues or is serious, report the incident to a person with authority.

**Observer**        If you see an occurrence of disrespectful behaviour. You are not innocent. You have a responsibility to call attention to the disrespectful behaviour by bringing this behaviour to the attention of a person with authority. Offer suggestions for more respectful behaviour.

### **Persons with Authority**

Volunteer Chairs, Board Members, Directors, and Managers should address disrespect immediately. Ultimately, it is the VBGA Board of Directors' responsibility to provide a respectful and harassment-free workplace. To report disrespectful behaviour, direct your concern to the person of authority you report to. If your concern involves this person, direct your concern to VBGA Management or a member of the Executive Committee of the VBGA Board of Directors.

### **What is the VBGA to do?**

To ensure a respectful workplace, the VBGA Board of Directors and VBGA Management will provide a healthy work environment by:



## **Training**

- provide training on respectful workplaces to all volunteers and staff
- hold orientations with all new employees and at each volunteer orientation to review an individual's rights, responsibilities, and obligations toward others
- provide diversity training
- provide conflict resolution training and make sure all Volunteer Chairs, Board of Directors, Managers, and Directors are skilled in handling conflict

## **Establishing policies & practices**

- review policies and practices to make sure respect is the organizational norm
- develop a respectful workplace policy with the involvement of staff and volunteers
- support and encourage people who practice respectful behaviour

## **Building accountability**

- hold VBGA Management, Board of Directors, Volunteer Chairs and staff responsible for their behaviour
- investigate all complaints of disrespect and harassment
- assess respectful behaviour in performance evaluations

## **What can an individual do?**

You can model respect by practicing the following behaviour:

- try to understand the other person's point of view
- accept values and opinions that are different from your own
- identify your own feelings before you share your concerns with another person
- do not blame, threaten or name call even if you are angry or hurt
- report abuse, discrimination or harassment

