***VBGA Fellowship**: A collaborative opportunity offered by the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association* (VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory) *and the* Institute for Environmental Learning

Now accepting applications for the 2027 VBGA Fellowship program!
Application opens: Nov 1, 2026.
Application closes: December 31, 2026

VBGA Fellowship Details
Location: VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory
Term: March-early Dec 2027
Commitment: 18 hours per month (hybrid, with an expectation of being in-person at VanDusen Botanical Gardens and/or Bloedel Conservatory)
Award: $4000 (potential to combine award with external funding ie Mitacs)
Supervision: Dr. David Zandvliet (Simon Fraser University Professor- Faculty of Education, UNESCO Chair, Co-Director and founder of the Institute for Environmental Learning) and Chantal Martin (Director of Education & Research, VBGA)
Research Method: Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Research Goal: The VBGA Fellowship involves participatory action research focused on environmental education programs located at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.
Fellowships Available in 2027: Three fellowships will be competitively awarded to suitably qualified and deserving candidates.
Student Requirement: At minimum, currently studying in a graduate program at a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution. Diverse areas of study welcome!

Fellowship Description:
Humans are living in the world unsustainably, changing the global climate, overconsuming, while remaining detached from the very ecosystems we are a part of. This is especially true within large urban centres such as Vancouver where for many, meaningful access to natural spaces is made difficult or is constrained by cultural and /or economic factors. Still, botanical gardens such as those managed by the VBGA have a unique opportunity to both develop and implement formal and informal programming to remedy this situation: having locations directly imbedded within the urban fabric of a major city while also benefitting from a wealth of biological and cultural diversity in their living collections.

Through the VBGA fellowship program, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory have become unique sites for a vibrant and expanding research program which studies the potential and efficacy of using these unique spaces as locations for diverse and inclusive environmental learning. Students proposed for these graduate fellowships will be experienced or promising researchers enrolled at a BC Postsecondary Institution who wish to undertake community engaged research and work collaboratively with the Institute for Environmental Learning and the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association.

Fellowship Expectations: Recipients of the VBGA fellowships will be expected to participate in educational programming at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory while also engaging in the development and implementation of the participatory action research program. It is anticipated that fellows will spend a minimum of 18 hours per month (on average) from March to early December, though the timing of these hours may vary according to variations in scheduled programming and research needs. The fellowship will culminate with an annual report detailing research undertaken.

See previous VBGA Fellowship publications:

- Biocultural Education in Botanical Gardens- BGCI Roots Journal
- Reverence for Nature: A Biocultural Journey in Botanical Gardens - Terralingua
- Pairing Autoethnography with Biocultural Diversity in Botanical Gardens | CLEARING: PNW Journal of Environmental Education in the Pacific Northwest
- Fostering a Lifelong Love of Plants; Educator Stories from a Botanical Garden | SFU Educational Review
- Episode 36: Community Engaged Research and Environmental Education: Part 1
- VBGA-SFU Fellowship Receives United Nations Recognition - VanDusen Botanical Garden

Potential Program/Research Development Opportunities in 2027

- Learning Garden: A new educational space consisting of raised garden beds
- Impact and evaluation methods
- Researching and developing educational products
- Climate change and botanical gardens
- Citizen science and education
- Biocultural diversity and ethnobotany
- Innovative education programs
- Indigenous Perspectives and connection to land, traditional and contemporary ethnobotany and connection to place.
- Nature-focused educational exhibitry

VBGA Educational Programming available to the selected Fellows

- Field trip programs
- Nature Kits
- Pollinator Days
- Camps
- Teacher Professional Development

- Adult and Programs
- Community Outreach
- Learning Garden

To apply please send a statement of personal interest and resume (pdf) to Dr. David Zandvliet at david_zandvliet@sfu.ca **and Chantal Martin** cmartin@vandusen.org

About the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association: The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) is a charitable not-for-profit, incorporated under the BC Societies Act. The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) and the City of Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) are joint operating partners for VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory. About - VanDusen Botanical Garden

"Our mission is 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."

About the Institute for Environmental Learning: Institute for Environmental Learning – A cutting-edge educational research group working towards a sustainable future for British Columbia