

VBGA CLIPPINGS

FALL 2017

TIME WELL SPENT

By Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

Most of us have an intuitive sense that time spent in nature is good for what ails us, whether it is a walk in the woods, lolling by the seashore, or puttering in the garden. Recent technological advances are allowing different scientific disciplines to develop a much stronger understanding of how nature benefits our physical, mental and spiritual health.

Nature's praises have been sung throughout history. In the 6th century BCE, Cyrus the Great built gardens for relaxation amid the bustling Ancient Persian capital of Pasargadae. The 16th century physician Paracelsus proclaimed, "That the art of healing comes from nature, not from the physician." Famed Scottish-American naturalist John Muir advised: "Keep close to Nature's heart... break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean."

Not surprisingly, the idea of the restorative power of nature as medicine has been embraced in many countries. In Japan, guided relaxation walks in the woods — called shinrin-yoku, or "forest bathing" — encourage participants to be mindful and take in the forest atmosphere with all of their senses. South Korea has three official Healing Forests including the popular "Saneum Healing Forest" which features guides called "health rangers." Researchers have documented many benefits of this practice, including increased self-esteem, improved mood and stress reduction.

Scientists have gained insight that the benefits of forest bathing partly come from breathing in phytoncides, chemicals given off by plants to help protect themselves from harmful germs and insects. When people inhale phytoncides their bodies react with an increase in number and activity of the Natural Killer cells that help our bodies to fight off tumors and viruses.

The concept of nature as medicine is having an impact on alternative and traditional medical practices. Compared to the costs and possible side-effects of prescription medicine, natural cures become more appealing. Increasing numbers of North American doctors are replacing pharmaceuticals with outdoor prescriptions advising obese, diabetic, anxious and depressed patients to spend time in a nature-rich place.

Recent studies have examined nature's effect on the brain, and the results are illuminating. The National Academy of Sciences reported in 2015 that walking in a park reduced blood flow to a part of the brain that is typically associated with brooding. The key researcher, Greg Bratman, believes that nature may influence "how you allocate your attention and whether or not you focus on negative emotions." Harnessing MRI technology, Korean researchers observed volunteers' brain activity while viewing images of cities and nature. Pictures of urban scenes resulted in brains showing more blood flow to the amygdala, which processes fear and anxiety, while images of the natural world lit up areas associated with empathy and altruism. *Continued...*

INSIDE:

VBGA Staff news
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...and more



The Grotto: A favourite spot for visitors at the Garden



TIME WELL SPENT, CONTINUED

With growing global trends towards urbanization, it becomes crucial to inject the positive effects of natural elements into daily urban living. In 2009, Dutch researchers found a lower incidence of 15 diseases — including diabetes, migraines, asthma, heart disease, anxiety and depression — in people who lived within half a mile of green space. Similarly, University of Exeter researchers found that those living near more green space reported less mental distress. Author Richard Louv even coined a phrase — “nature deficit disorder” — to describe the well-documented malady of people living in high-tech societies.

Thankfully, the remedy to “nature deficit disorder” can be found in gardens, whether in backyards or on apartment balconies. As one maven quipped, “Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get tomatoes.” Offering up further scientific basis for getting our hands dirty, a study in the journal *Neuroscience* found that soil bacteria called *Mycobacterium vaccae* increased the serotonin in the brains of mice, while a 2010 study determined that mice were able to navigate a maze twice as quickly after being fed this live bacteria.

These are just a few leaves in the forest of research on the health benefits of nature. Fortunately, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory provide wonderful opportunities for urban dwellers to discover nature’s restorative powers for themselves. 🌿



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our second issue of Clippings in 2017! In our spring issue we told you about a number of projects we had underway – new uniforms for volunteers, the beginning of a video project and changes to our Membership structure. Heading into late-summer, I’m pleased to report that all of these efforts have either been completed or are on schedule.

We’ve also completed our review of our performance in 2016. If you haven’t already seen it, you can download a copy of our Annual Report on our website at vandusengarden.org/vbga-annual-general-meeting. Among other things, in it you will see that we raised over \$1 million dollars for the first time in the VBGA’s history – a testament to the loyalty, support and commitment of our community.

As you will see in the rest of this issue, 2017 is going well so far. Our spring Plant Sale brought almost 14,000 people to the Garden and grossed \$122,000 in sales. Another tremendous effort from our Plant Sale Committee and 400+ volunteers who help run the event.

In addition, we have partnered with the Park Board in the development of the new *Backyard Bird Garden* adjacent to Shaughnessy Restaurant. The VBGA contributed \$20,000 to fund the installation of a birdhouse for children, plant material and benches to the project which should be mostly complete by mid-fall.

Please do take the time to read through this issue. As always, we thank you for your support and hope to see you in the Garden or Conservatory soon!

Shawn Mitchell, Executive Director

VBGA 2017 AGM & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS

On the evening of April 24, 2017 over 140 members attended the Annual General Meeting of the VBGA. In addition to reports from the Executive Director and Board of Directors, three new directors were elected and an auditor was appointed for 2017. In keeping with its efforts to have more transparency and accountability to its members and supporters, the Association distributed its 2016 annual report which includes for the first time performance benchmarks to track our progress with our current strategic plan. Before the AGM, Awards of Recognition for Volunteer Service were given to 16 volunteers and Steve Norman received Volunteer of the Year for 2016. 76 volunteers were recognized for their years of contributions, which ranged from five years to 25 years! 🌿



Award of Recognition | Award of Distinction | Volunteer of the Year

VBGA STAFF NEWS

In our last issue of Clippings, we announced the retirement of our Volunteer Services Director, Judy Aird. I am pleased to announce that we have successfully recruited a new Volunteer Engagement Director.

Heidi Jakop is coming to us via the volunteer programs at the MS Society of Canada and The Heart & Stroke Foundation. She is a proven leader of both staff and volunteers, and has demonstrated expertise in the areas of volunteer recruitment and engagement, training and development, and supporting the strategic growth of programs through the sophisticated deployment of passionate and knowledgeable volunteers.

In addition to her work at MSSC and Heart & Stroke, Heidi is the President of the Administrators of Volunteer Resources of BC - a provincial network of volunteer management professionals who are committed to building a strong and vibrant profession by inspiring exceptional leadership of volunteers, fostering connections, and shaping the future of volunteerism – and she is also an instructor at Langara College where she teaches as part of the Volunteer Coordinator Certificate Program.

Last, but not least, Heidi has also been a board member of the North Shore Community Garden Society. We are excited to have Heidi on the team and pleased at the welcome our community has given her.

Shawn Mitchell, Executive Director

Heidi Jakop

IN THE GARDEN: SWEET GUM (*Liquidambar species*)

Come autumn's changing palette of foliage at VanDusen, the brilliant yellow, violet and crimson colours of sweet gum (*Liquidambar species*), make it one of the more colourful trees in the Garden and one of the last to lose its leaves, with foliage hanging on well into December. Occasionally mistaken for maple trees with their similarly shaped, lobed leaves, sweet gums are distinguished from maples by their alternate (not opposite) leaves and branches, and by their spiky, gumball-shaped fruit instead of the single-seeded, winged samaras characteristic of maples. Some sweet gum species, like the American sweet gum, have recognizable corky outgrowths on their twigs.

Sweet gum is a robust, pest-resistant tree that is easy to grow and prefers moist, well-drained soil in full sun. Formerly classified in the witch hazel family, *Liquidambar* is the sole genus in the sweet gum family (Altingiaceae), with 15 species from Eastern Europe, Asia and Eastern North America. American sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) occurs from northeastern USA, south to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and into Central America, and is a popular ornamental. You may choose from dozens of cultivars, including several recipients of the Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit, to find the perfect tree for your garden, including dwarf, columnar or pyramidal forms. Mature American sweet gums can reach 30 m tall in the wild.

Its generic scientific name suggests a colourful story and that is certainly the case. *Liquidambar* is derived from the Latin *liquidis* for fluid and the Arabic *ambar* for amber, a reference to the aromatic resin or gum produced by the bark of mature trees. The resin contains chemical compounds with anti-fungal, insecticidal and medicinal properties, including shikimic acid, the precursor to the active ingredient of the anti-viral drug Tamiflu. Traditionally the resin was enjoyed as chewing gum or added to tobacco as a sedative, and was burnt as incense. The resin is also a fixative in soaps, perfumes and lacquers, while the wood is coveted by woodworkers for furniture making and veneers.

VanDusen has several sweet gums in the Eastern North America collection, along the Autumn Stroll, in the Fern Dell, and at the foot of the Rhododendron Walk.

Sweet gum (*Liquidambar sp.*)





A TREE FOR VIVI

By Wendy Turnbull, Communications Volunteer

Lee Renaud is a social worker who supports adoption planning at the Ministry of Children and Family Development. After learning that Lee and her husband Matthew had lost their daughter Vivian to cancer at only fourteen months of age, her colleagues found a unique way to express their sympathy through the Adopt-a-Tree program at VanDusen Botanical Garden.

It was incredibly brave of Lee to speak about her loss. She offered this quote by Elizabeth Stone that captures the emotion of parenthood, "Making the decision to have a child - it is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body." When someone loses a child it is difficult for friends and family to find words of comfort. When Lee returned to work, Deb Kohen, Director of Practice, surprised her with an Adopt-a-Tree (AAT) brochure from VanDusen Botanical Garden. Included was a list of the 30 co-workers who had been mobilized by Deb to raise the \$2,000 to adopt a tree for Vivi. Lee eloquently described the power of community: "Sometimes you are in such a hopeless situation. Your friends and family want to help. Through the gift of the tree they were able to do something for us. It was a significant gesture of kindness and healing for them, healing for us."

Deeply touched by this gesture, Lee sent thank you cards to all the donors along with a photograph of Vivi's tree with its plaque. Long before the tree was adopted, Lee announced at a family brunch at the Shaughnessy Restaurant in the Garden that they were expecting their second child, Vivi. When Vivi was first diagnosed with cancer at four months of age they learned that there was no treatment for children that young and that it was just a matter of days or weeks. Vivi proved them wrong and lived another ten months. Through the support of family, friends and Canuck Place, Vivi was able to have palliative care at home and a good quality of life.

Vivi's memorial was held at VanDusen. Three years after a child's passing families are invited by Canuck Place to a candle lighting and balloon letting ceremony that is held in the Garden - proof of the healing power of nature.

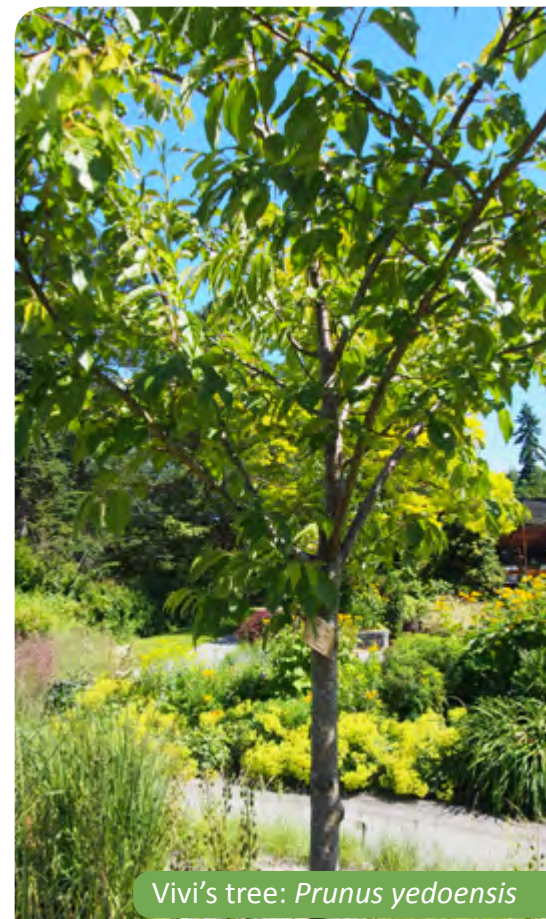
The journey of picking Vivi's tree began when VBGA Development Director, Gordon White, connected the family with AAT volunteer Jaki dePape who helpfully walked the family through the Garden as they contemplated their choice. The Renauds wanted a flowering tree - a magnolia or a cherry because it connected to a powerful memory. Just after her diagnosis, when Vivi was still enjoying life fully, the family decided to take a walk in the Garden. It was springtime and the flowers were in joyous bloom.

The location of the tree was key as Lee said, "You can't miss it!" Vivi's tree can be seen from the Shaughnessy Restaurant and the entrance area of the Garden. Visitors travel a little path by Livingstone Lake to reach the tree whose plaque reads: "Akebono or Daybreak Cherry. *Prunus yedoensis* in honour of Vivi Renaud." It means a lot to Lee that her daughter is called "Vivi" on the plaque instead of the more formal "Vivian." The tree stands alone and will grow to be a showpiece in the Garden. As Lee poignantly expresses, "It is young but will grow like our daughter should have."

From the beginning adopting a tree has been a family affair involving the Renaud's four-year old son, Henry, every step of the way. Only two-years

old when Vivi passed, Henry helped select the tree and hang the plaque. The process has given Henry a place to remember his sister as a "happy baby." Big brother is delighted to pose for photos with his little sister's tree. On November 15, 2016, the first anniversary of Vivi's passing, Lee, Matthew and Henry, took a walk along the path to Vivi's tree. Later that month Lee went into labour at BC Women's Hospital and they decided to go for a quick walk in the Garden while waiting for labour to really get going! On November 29, 2016, lovely Madelyn Grace Renaud was born.

The Renauds now live in Maple Ridge, but made a special visit in early April to see Vivi's tree in bloom. As Lee expressed, "It made our hearts feel good to see that her tree was growing. In all honesty, we never thought we would become so attached to her tree... It gives us a beautiful place to remember Vivi and the love of our friends who donated it to us." The tree is illuminated during the Garden's Festival of Lights but each day it shines a light on the power of community, healing and the incredible kindness of 30 individual donors. 🍃



Vivi's tree: *Prunus yedoensis*

A POWERFUL TEACHER

By Gillian Drake, Education Director

The people in our lives, the places we frequent, and the things we do all lead us to meaningful life lessons and formative moments that help to shape who we are, what we value, respect and advocate for. Reflect a moment on your powerful experiences. What incited your greatest personal journeys of learning and growth? Often it's an incredible teacher who opens doors to new adventures, enabling and encouraging students to venture forth. And sometimes, the magnificence of the natural world reminds us that the doors to learning are always open, 24/7. It's up to us to recognize it.

I started thinking about what I've observed and learned in nature. It's only a partial list: resilience, patience, community, interdependence, balance, cycles, mindfulness, mutually-beneficial relationships, adaptability, sustainable land management, fragility, innovation, and persistence. VanDusen's ever-changing, 22-hectare classroom is full of living examples of these. Exploring nature within a gorgeous, botanical garden setting makes it broadly appealing and comfortable, and as such, VanDusen is a gateway to deeper engagement in nature.

We all recognize the power of a great teacher, as we've been touched by their passion, encouragement, and seemingly random facts. Running sand between her fingers, someone at the beach recently reflected on a comment made by her Grade 1 teacher: that there are more stars in the galaxy than all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world. Likely a fleeting sentence from the teacher, but one that continued to resonate with her student decades later.

The combination of a beautiful, innately inspirational learning space (the Garden), and informed teachers can be particularly powerful, thus we have a responsibility to the youth of Vancouver to bring this to them. The VBGA embraces opportunities to show teachers how to use plants and gardens to open doors to discovery, and how to facilitate their students' learning from, and in, nature. BC's new educational curriculum provides one framework for this, as does our community's passion for organic food gardening.



Educators counting worms during our School Garden Ecology Workshop

Empowering Teachers in Nature

This fall, we are pleased to offer several opportunities for teacher professional development at VanDusen. Lea Elliot will conduct the popular *School Garden Ecology Workshop*, where teachers explore how to grow a bountiful organic garden in harmony with nature, creating ecologically-balanced ecosystems in their schoolyards. Teachers learn through discussions, research in the Yosef Wosk Library, and hands-on activities such as an earthworm survey. A newer workshop, *Inspire Environmental Awareness in your Students*, explores the use of the environment to meet curricular and core skill competencies and empower students towards a lifetime of environmental stewardship. New this fall, our botanical illustration instructor, Katharine Dickinson, will teach a Pro-D workshop, *Drawing Nature*, developing skills leading to better science and art instruction.

Throughout the year, we are always planning classes within Adult Education to benefit teachers involved in their school garden, or to bring ecology into the classroom. Teachers are eligible to take most of these classes at no charge at VanDusen. Here's a sampling of such classes in the latest brochure (taking place between Sept-Feb): *Fall Planting and Winter Garden Prep*, *Permaculture*, *Indoor Vertical Gardens*, *Soil Lab for Gardeners*, *Microgreens and Sprouts all Winter*, *Easy Native Plants*, *Spiral Herb Gardens*. We are grateful to our partners in garden education, the Vancouver Master Gardeners, for their financial support, allowing us to waive class fees for K-12 teachers in the community.



Drawing Plants with Katharine Dickinson

TEACHER OPEN HOUSE:

Thursday, August 31st, 10 am - 12 pm

Come and see what VanDusen has to offer.

More info on our events page at vandusengarden.org

GARDEN EVENTS & MORE

View all Garden events at vandusengarden.org

SEPT - DEC 2017 EVENTS

Some events charge admission.

Check vandusengarden.org for details and event updates!

Dahlia Show

Saturday, Sept 2 - Sunday, Sept 3, 12 - 3:30 pm
Floral Hall & Cedar Room

Early Chrysanthemum Sale

Saturday, Sept 9 - Sunday, Sept 10, 12 - 4 pm, Floral Hall

Alpine Garden Club of BC - Fall Sale

Saturday, Sept 16, 1 - 4 pm, Floral Hall

Medicine Wheel Ceremony

Sunday, September 17, noon - 3 pm
Sunday, Dec 17, noon - 3 pm
Canadian Heritage Garden

Bird Walks

Saturday, Sept 23, 10 am
Saturday, Oct 28, 10 am
Saturday, Nov 25, 10 am
Saturday, Dec 16, 10 am
Free for Members or with admission. Meet in the HSBC Arrival Hall in the Visitor Centre.

Works by Anna Milton

On now through Sept 27 in the Yosef Wosk Library & Resource Centre during Library hours.

ZimCarvings

On now through Sept 30 in the Discovery Room and in the Garden during Garden hours.

Dried Flower Arrangers' Sales

Friday, Sept 29, Saturday, Sept 30, Sunday, Oct 1
Friday, Oct 27, Saturday, Oct 28, Sunday, Oct 29
Friday, Nov 24, Saturday, Nov 25, Sunday, Nov 26
Fridays 1 - 4 pm / Saturdays & Sundays, 10 am - 4 pm
HSBC Arrival Hall, Visitor Centre

Vancouver Mycological Society 2017 Mushroom Show

Sunday, Oct 22, 11 am - 4 pm, Floral Hall & Cedar Room

VanDusen Members Only Sale at the Gift Shop

Wed. Nov 15 & Thurs. Nov 16, 10 am - 7 pm

GET IN TOUCH

Full staff directory at:

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

Membership 604.257.8675 | membership@vandusen.org

Fundraising 604.257.8677 | fundraising@vandusen.org

Volunteering 604.257.8674 | hjakop@vandusen.org

Adult Education 604.718.5898 | tclarke@vandusen.org

Library 604.257.8668 | library@vandusen.org



SAVE THE DATE: 2017 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

This holiday tradition runs nightly from December 1 to January 2, 2018 from 4:30pm – 9pm, with late nights from December 15 – 24 when we keep the lights on until 10pm. The Garden is closed on December 25th, Christmas Day. Purchase tickets in advance to skip the line! For more information, please visit www.vancouver.ca/vandusenFOL for the most up to date information on the event.

MEMBER CORNER



Discover something new every month and every season! Are you receiving our monthly Member News by email? If not, and you wish to receive it, please contact the Membership Office at 604.257.8675 or membership@vandusen.org.

Member Mornings at VanDusen Garden

Bring your camera or sketchbook and enjoy the final Member Mornings of the calendar year:

- Sunday, August 13, 8 am – 9 am
- Wednesday, September 13, 8 am – 10 am
- Sunday, September 24, 8 am – 10 am

Please note that Members must scan their valid membership card to enter. Visitors accompanying a Member will need to wait until opening hours to join a Member in the Garden.

NEW! More Benefits with your VBGA Membership!

As a VBGA Member you are now eligible for discounts and savings at Vancouver's top attractions. Visit vancouverattractions.com for details. For a complete list of all attractions and discounts, please go to vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership. Click on the Benefits page. Any questions at all, please contact the Membership Office.