

**Please follow the black and white number and arrow signs to take this tour. Also watch your step as some areas may be slippery when wet. Parts of this tour are not wheel-chair accessible.**

At this time of year when rain is plentiful, trees that have a weeping structure seem to mimic the mood of the season well. The branches that cascade downwards often hold the droplets of water beautifully and present a graceful silhouette. Have you ever wondered why some trees reach to the sky and others reach to the earth? The latter generally results from a mutation that causes a seedling's branches to have an unusual, drooping growth form different from its parents. This weeping branch mutation can often be preserved through cloning, and these clones can be sold as cultivars with names such as 'Pendula'. This tour will point out some of VanDusen's deciduous and evergreen weeping specimens. Keep your eyes open for others not included.

As you exit the Visitor Centre, turn left and cross the Plaza towards the wooden bridge. Your first stop is a **1 – weeping Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* 'Pendula')**. This is a true curiosity, since one always thinks of these trees as being tall, straight native giants. Now keep left and walk past the reflecting Bentall Pool, Fragrance and Herb Gardens and turn left at the arrow. You will see a stunning **2 – weeping blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus libani* subsp. *atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula')** flowing like a blue-green waterfall over a stone-pillared structure in front of Shaughnessy Restaurant. It is a true cedar and a prostrate form of the blue Atlas cedar, which is native to the Atlas Mountains in Algeria and Morocco, so it can tolerate heat and drought. This mature example was planted in VanDusen early in the development of the Garden, around 1975. Now turn right and enter the fairly new Backyard Bird Garden. Behind the yellow Bird House viewing structure you will find a stately **3 – Borne weeping birch (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Bornyensis')**. This is a cultivated variety of European beech. It originated in Borny, France, and was introduced by a nursery there around 1870. It has been in North America since about 1895. The word "beech" is similar to the word "book" in various languages, possibly because beech bark was used to write on and to make some of the first books. Beechnuts are small but nourishing for both people and livestock. And although not durable for building, beech wood was used to make bowls and utensils because it doesn't exude aromatic oils. Beech leaves were also used to stuff mattresses since they would last longer and smell sweeter than straw!

Exit the Backyard Bird Garden, turn right and follow the path to its end. In the bed on your right at the cross-roads, you will see a uniquely shaped **4 - weeping giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum')**. This slender, version is a descendant of a mutated seedling selected at Lalande Nursery in France in 1863. Its branches grow close to its trunk, creating a sinuous silhouette. It becomes a star during the Festival of Lights in December when it is decked with lights. Now retrace your steps and follow the stone wall leading back to the Rose Garden. Above the wall you will find a **5 - weeping eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula')**. The species is native to eastern North America, and is a fast grower at a foot or more per year. This cultivar has branches that sweep to the ground where it continues as a ground cover. It is semi-dwarf, so it grows wider than it does tall. It attracts birds but is not a favourite of deer and rabbits. Typical of white pines, its needles are clustered in bundles of five. Close by is **6 - Walker's pea tree (*Caragana arborescens* 'Walker')**. This grafted variety was developed at the Morden Research Station in Manitoba, Canada. It is a delicately textured specimen plant with fernlike, finely-cut foliage and displays golden flowers mid-spring. It is also tough and can tolerate frost, full sun, wind, dry soil, deer, rabbits and neglect!

Now go up the stone steps, walk under the arch on your right and continue on the paved path to a four-way crossroad. Keep walking straight ahead. You will soon arrive at the Honourable David C. Lam Cherry Grove. On your right and left are **7 - weeping spring cherry trees (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula* 'Beni-shidare')**. These were planted as a gift from the federal government in honour of Expo '86. 'Beni-shidare' means "pink-weeping" in Japanese. A little farther along, also on opposite sides of the path are **8 - Snow Fountains™ cherry trees (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula* 'Snofozam')**. Japan has long celebrated its cherry trees with cherry blossom viewing parties occurring day or night and involving much food, drink and entertainment. Although the berries from such ornamentals are inedible for humans, the genus *Prunus* also includes edibles like plums, peaches, apricots and almonds. The Snow Fountains™ cherry trees have white, showy, fragrant flowers that attract birds and butterflies. Return in April during the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival to see all these trees at various stages of blooming. It is an amazing sight! As you continue on this path through the Great Lawn area, you will see a long, grooved concrete sculpture on your left. Nearby is a **9 - weeping chrysanthemum-flowered cherry (*Prunus* 'Kiku-shidare-zakura')**. This is an old Japanese cultivar known

since the end of the C19, and makes an excellent lawn specimen or focal point for gardens. From mid to late spring it is smothered in rich pink, double flowers that look like powder puffs.

Continue walking straight ahead, past the Douglas-fir grove and up the stone-lined treads at the cross-road. At the top, turn right and head for the waterfall (or pond if it is not functioning yet). At the water's edge is a **10 - weeping katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Morioka Weeping')**. This is one of the most graceful of weeping trees. The species is native to China and Japan. Its heart-shaped leaves appear reddish-purple in the spring, turn blue-green for the summer and become a bright yellow in the fall. The scent of the fallen leaves has been described as that of caramel or burnt sugar, strawberries and cotton candy! This is another deer-resistant tree. Keep on the path as it curves downward to your right until you come to a **11 - maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Santa Cruz')** on your left. *Ginkgo biloba* is native to China and Japan. The cultivar 'Santa Cruz' was developed from a seedling found in Santa Cruz, California, in the 1950s. It is not so much a weeping, as a spreading tree. Ginkgos are known as living fossils, since they preceded and survived the age of the dinosaurs, which ate their leaves. Modern deer are not as keen on them. They are gymnosperms, more closely related to pines than oaks. They are highly tolerant of urban pollution. They are dioecious, meaning they have separate male and female trees. The females produce a fleshy cone which is edible and used in traditional medicines but which also smells like vomit when it falls to the ground (due to the production of butyric acid). For this reason, male trees are often preferred for ornamental planting.

Keep walking down the incline to a paved path and turn left. Look right for a **12 - weeping pussy willow (*Salix caprea* 'Weeping Sally')**. *Salix caprea*, also known as goat willow, is native to Europe and western Asia. This name probably derives from a C16 illustration by Hieronymus Bock, a German botanist, in his text 'Herbal' which portrays the plant being typically browsed by a goat. The plant produces soft, silvery catkins which appear in late winter to early spring before coming into leaf.

Now continue down the path to the next crossroad, turn right, walk until you see arrows directing you over the lawn on your left and to a set of stone stairs (near the sculpture) leading across the little stream flowing into Heron Lake on your right. On the other side of the stream, turn right and follow the mulched path to its end along the Lake's edge. Stand near the **13** sign and look straight ahead up the lawn to the **golden weeping willow (*Salix* × *sepulcralis* var. *chrysocoma*)** at the water's edge. This species of willow is common to temperate climates and is widely grown on BC's south coast. It is an artificial hybrid between *S. alba* and *S. babylonica*, two other species of willow with characteristics of strong hardiness and the weeping habit. Also from this viewpoint, look across the lake at another **Borne weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Bornyensis')** and a **weeping mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia* 'Pendula')** to its left. *Sorbus aucuparia* is widely dispersed across Eurasia. Small red berries ripen in late summer and are much appreciated by birds. They are also used by humans in traditional medicine and as fodder for cattle. The wood is tough and flexible and is excellent for wood working.

Go left across the grass to the paved path, turn right, then right again at the cross-road and look for a **14 - Camperdown elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii')** on your left. This is a cultivar of Wych Elm, discovered in about 1835 in the forest at Camperdown House in Dundee, Scotland. All Camperdown Elms are descended, through cuttings and grafting from this single plant. Their size and form are determined by latitude, location, what part of the parent tree cuttings are taken from and the stock on which it is grafted. In lower latitudes, such as Victoria, Australia, they have been known to grow to 14m by 14 m!

Your last stop is just ahead at the corner of the stone wall on your left. Here you will see a prostrate **15 - cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani* 'Sargentii')** cascading down the wall. This dwarf cultivar usually has branches that trail along the ground, but can be trained into an upright weeping form if staked when young. This is the end of the tour. To return to the Visitor's Centre, turn left and then right after the bridge and take the path to its end. Or, continue your own tour of the remainder of the Garden. And come back to see all the deciduous weeping trees in glorious leaf!