

VBGA CLIPPINGS

THE MISSION OF THE VBGA is "to inspire understanding of the vital importance of plants to all life." Each issue of "Clippings" offers you fresh insight into how we carry out that mission, and deliver benefits to our members and the community.

INSIDE:

- Bloedel Conservatory Celebrates 50 years under the dome!
- JOA update from VBGA President Don Zarowny.
- Library Archives: VBGA beginnings and history!

...AND MORE

The VBGA would like to acknowledge that our work at both VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory operates on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the x̣ʷməθkʷəỵəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Photo: Raymond Chan



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Don Zarowny, VBGA President

I hope you had time during the long summer evenings to visit the Garden and Conservatory and enjoy the trees and plants in full bloom. As the evenings get shorter I look forward to the winter months, when the Gardens become more austere and tranquil (but just as beautiful as ever).

This is an important year in the life of VBGA; we will be renegotiating our Joint Operating Agreement with the Park Board, and we are celebrating the 45th anniversary of the VanDusen Guides. The first guides were recruited and trained in 1974, (the year before the Garden opened) and have been doing fantastic work ever since. I speak on behalf of the entire VBGA Board and staff when I say that we feel so lucky to have such strong and longstanding support and engagement from our volunteers. Thank you!

In my role as VBGA President, I see it as my responsibility to provide an update on the new Joint Operating Agreement we are currently working on with the Park Board. As many of you know, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory are jointly operated by VBGA and the Park Board. This arrangement means both bodies share responsibility for the day to day running of the Gardens. The fruits of this close and longstanding relationship can be seen throughout the Garden and Conservatory, best represented in what you see every day at both locations.

Over the next year, VBGA and Park Board will update our longstanding Joint Operating Agreement (JOA). This process is important, because the terms agreed upon will impact how the Gardens will be run, operated and managed into the future.

Independent consultants have been hired by the Park Board to complete a strategic business review. This evaluation process will result in an exciting, new, long term vision for Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden. This 4-phase process began during the summer and is ongoing:

Phase 1: Stakeholder engagement (Where we're at now)

Input and feedback is being gathered from selected VBGA board, members, donors, volunteers and the general public.

Phase 2: Strategic Plan

Composition of a strategic plan for both VanDusen Garden and Bloedel Conservatory outlining future vision for both facilities.

Phase 3: Recommendations

Independent consultants will provide recommendations on financial governance and operational models and on how VBGA will work with Park Board into the future.

Phase 4: New JOA Created

Creation of a new JOA (Joint Operating Agreement) to be reviewed by VBGA Board and elected Park Board commissioners culminating with what I hope will be ratification by July 2020.

We are currently at Phase 1 and I expect to transition to Phase 2 shortly. At this decisive time in the history of VBGA I am providing bimonthly updates via email. If you are not on our mailing list and would like to receive my updates contact the Membership Office on 604-257-8675 or visit the VanDusen Membership Desk to purchase a membership and have your name added to our emailing list.

In the meantime, I encourage you all to get outside and enjoy the natural beauty of the winter months.



Q&A WITH VBGA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We check in with Stephen Shapiro, VBGA (Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association) Executive Director to ask him about the upcoming J.O.A. (Joint Operating Agreement) negotiations.



What is the purpose of the JOA negotiations?

The negotiations aim to create a refreshed and meaningful operating agreement between us (VBGA) and Vancouver Park Board concerning the running of VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory. Our agreement was last reviewed in 1994 and much has changed in the intervening years.

What should VBGA members and supporters know about the current JOA negotiation process?

Our members, volunteers, donors and supporters should know that these negotiations are integral to the life, history, and future of the VBGA, and a vital step so that we can continue to provide our community with opportunities to connect with nature. Currently, both VBGA and Park Board are meeting with consultants and working through an extensive stakeholder engagement process.

What can members look forward to once the JOA process is complete?

Members and supporters can look forward to a clearer vision and framework for the operations of VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory. This will provide a new partnership platform for us (VBGA) and the

Park Board to plan for the future, and I am excited to be working towards this new mutual understanding.

How can VBGA members support the Association during negotiations?

Make sure you sign up to our member e-news for regular VBGA updates. You will also receive bimonthly updates from VBGA President Don Zarowny providing updates on the overall JOA process. To receive our e-news contact the Membership Office at 604-257-8675 or visit the VanDusen Visitor Centre Membership Desk.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDRAISING

by Josh Coward, Director of Development

Since you last heard from us, our Development Department has been hard at work strengthening the VBGA sustainable fundraising program, a focus aimed at allowing us to provide all the programs and services we currently offer to the public, long into the future. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you who have made contributions; your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Our ever-popular Adopt-A-Tree program continues to be a big hit with donors, who report feeling a special connection with the Garden upon adopting a tree. In the VanDusen Visitor Centre, you may have noticed the new Giving Circles and Trees-For-Life donor wall on display both parts of our fundraising initiatives. Our Giving Circles offer graduated recognition and benefits to those who support VBGA through continued donations. Benefits of the Giving Circles include family memberships, afternoon tea, donor events and tickets to the Festival of Lights. The Alma Society is our highest-level Giving Circle, and donors in this category are listed permanently on the Trees-For-Life donor wall and in publications. This year, the exclusive Alma Society dinner will be held in November at Seasons in the Park.

The Trees-For-Life initiative and Adopt-A-Tree program will help the VBGA continue to create unforgettable experiences for our members, guests and families each year. We again would like to thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden. If you would like to learn more about making a donation, visit vandusengarden.org or contact Josh Coward at 604-257-8190

HAPPY 50TH, BLOEDEL

by Penny Williams, Volunteer Writer

We see Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden as complementary halves of a greater whole, each offering a unique chance to connect deeply with nature. And yet, in fact the two locations had separate histories until 2010.

The Bloedel Conservatory opened its doors on December 6th 1969, a full six years before VanDusen. While forestry magnate Prentice Bloedel's financial backing was vital to the Conservatory's creation, his vision "to introduce people to the world of plants, show how plants grow and live, demonstrate the interdependence of every element in the ecosystem, foster stewardship, and be recreational and inspiring, as well as educational" still guides the mandate for VBGA today.

By the early 2000s, the Conservatory was flagging, not least because pre-Olympic construction along Cambie made public access extremely challenging. In 2009, the Park Board voted to close the facility post-Olympics, signaling the end for one of the most captivating opportunities to experience the natural world in all of British Columbia.

Local advocacy groups sprang into action to save the Conservatory, joined by the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association (as we were then known). We knew that the Conservatory offered an educational opportunity and an oasis of nature that Vancouver could not afford to lose.

In Vicky Earle's (Chair of the Bloedel Conservatory Strategic Advisory Committee of the VBGA Board of Directors) words, the Association offered "to apply its knowledge, skills and abilities to re-engage and re-invigorate Bloedel with the public.". In April 2010, the Park Board accepted a joint operating proposal from VBGA and Friends of the Bloedel Association and the Conservatory was saved.

Today as we walk the Conservatory's curving trails, we find ourselves transported to the tropics — the humid air, the scent of the earth, with more than 500 species of plant life around and above us, and, oh, the birds! The Conservatory offers an educational, but also inspiring and highly personal experience that cannot be matched this side of the Amazon.

Bloedel's corps of 40 trained and dedicated Docents (volunteers) are the beating heart of the Conservatory, and are dedicated to sharing their knowledge of the plants and birds with the public. Their expertise and passion keep the VBGA and Prentice Bloedel's vision for the Conservatory alive and well.

We enjoy the beauty, and at every turn discover a little more about our interdependence with the world represented inside the dome. A coffee shrub, for example, can offer new insight about the impact of our food choices on land use elsewhere — and therefore on biodiversity, wildlife habitats and species health, and human livelihoods as well.

If you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer at Bloedel Conservatory visit our website at www.vandusengarden.org/get-involved/volunteer/

Go say "Happy Birthday, Bloedel," in person. You'll be the one receiving the gift!



LIVING HISTORY

by Marina Princz, VBGA Librarian

To celebrate 50 years of Bloedel Conservatory we take a look back at the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association Journey. "From Then to Now".

The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) formed in 1966, and although it underwent several name changes between then and now, the essence of its mission has remained true. The original efforts and mission were to support growing public sentiment that the Shaughnessy golf course should be purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and transformed into a botanical garden.

For four years, the Association worked tirelessly to achieve this goal through awareness-building campaigns, lobbying, and fundraising. Finally, following lengthy negotiations between the City and provincial representatives, the CPR agreed to sell 55 acres of the golf course to the City for \$2 million. On August 30, 1975, after four years of development, the VanDusen Botanical Display Garden officially opened to the public. After nearly 10 years of hard work, the Botanical Gardens Association finally had a garden to care for.

PLANT MEMORIES THAT LAST

by Gillian Drake, Director of Education

An abundance of global research continues to reinforce the notion that being in nature makes us happier, healthier, and more productive. And yet today, many children and adults spend immense amounts of time indoors and in front of screens, increasingly disconnected from their local parks rich with trees, streams, and critters to explore and enjoy.

Developing a relationship with nature starts with meaningful outdoor experiences, and engaging interactions with animals and birds. As axes of biodiversity in the middle of the city, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory are ideal sites for learning about, and forging a lifelong appreciation of the natural world.

Karen, a school teacher and VBGA Member, has participated in professional development workshops, multi-session Garden Classroom series, and an Indigenous Perspectives and Natural History of BC Workshop, which she ranked in her "top 5 pro-D experiences" in 28 years with the Vancouver School Board. Her education experience at VanDusen prompted the entire teaching team at her school to attend a special VBGA workshop exploring native plants, indigenous

Today, the VBGA takes its stewardship of Bloedel Conservatory and VanDusen Botanical Garden as seriously as ever. We have developed dozens of education programs for adults and youth focused on sustainability, nature and gardening, and trained countless guides to facilitate tours for the public during their visits. Our fundraising campaigns have seen the VBGA raise millions of dollars for projects like our new Visitor Center, the new Backyard Bird Garden, new plants at Bloedel and VanDusen, exotic birds at Bloedel, as well as general operations in the Education Department and the Yosef Wosk Library and Resource Centre.

Currently, the VBGA engages a network of 900 volunteers. Our Volunteers contribute 45,000 hours annually in the delivery of key events as well as assisting in the operation of the Yosef Wosk Library and Resource Center and offer tours of both VanDusen and Bloedel.

Together with our members, volunteers, administrative staff, and in partnership with the Park Board, the VBGA continues to refresh and rekindle the foresight shown by the Association's founders back in 1966. As the Bloedel Conservatory celebrates its 50th anniversary and the VanDusen Botanical Garden enters its 45th year in operation, we look forward to acting as stewards to these treasures for the next generation.



ethnobotany, and relationship to place. Experiences like Karen's are invaluable because she and her colleagues can pass information they have learned onto the children they work with, thus re-forging links between today's younger generations and nature; our adult and children's education programs provide opportunities for all generations to forge real, lifelong connections with the outdoors. Our programs focus on enhancing community awareness and appreciation for horticulture and ecology, increasing understanding of our role in an urban ecosystem, and empowering participants to act as positive stewards of their environment.

To grow your connection with the outdoors or read more about the education programs we offer, check us out online at vandusen.org/learn/about-us/, email us at learn@vandusen.org or call 604-257-8669.

MEMBERSHIP

by Janene Preston, Director of
Membership Services

We might think we are nurturing our garden, but of course, it's our garden that is really nurturing us.

Jenny Uglow

No matter the season or the weather, VBGA Members support and enjoy visiting both VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory year round. Spring and Summer are the busiest seasons of the year at the Gardens and this year has been no exception!

2019 FUN FACTS & INFO:

11,500+ people representing 8,000 households now support the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) as members.

MEMBER ONLY APPRECIATION MONTH

The First ever Member Only Appreciation Month was held in April. Members attended free walk-and-learn tours at both VanDusen Garden and Bloedel Conservatory led by VBGA Educators and Park Board Commissioners with prizes offered. We will be expanding these opportunities next year – stay tuned!

9 "MEMBER ONLY MORNINGS"

were offered at VanDusen Botanical Garden from April to September. More are planned in 2020.

- Membership ensures we **connect people to plants!** Our Members continue to learn by attending our Adult Education programs and enjoy discounted, priority registration for Spring, Summer & ProD Day kids camps.
- **New opportunities to support the VBGA!** Donate and become a **Trees For Life Giving Circles** member today! Each circle represents a different tree with additional special benefits! Learn more at: vandusengarden.org/ways-to-give/ or visit the VanDusen Visitor Centre Information/Membership Desk.
- **Monthly electronic Member News!** Learn about the latest special offers for members. Hear about our adult and child education opportunities. Discover more about upcoming events - something new every month and every season! Contact the Membership Office at 604-257-8675 or membership@vandusen.org if you'd like to be added to the list!

- **Gift Certificates for Membership** continue to be popular! Share the beauty of the Gardens for your special occasion! Purchase in person at VanDusen Garden or over the phone 604-257-8675.

EVENTS

BIRD WALKS

December 14 2019, 11 January 2020, 8 February 2020.
All walks begin at 10am. Meet at the VanDusen Visitor Centre.

PLANT SALE: 42ND ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Save the date: April 26 2020.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS - MEMBER DISCOUNT

Festival runs from Sat. Nov 30, 2019 to Sun. Jan 5, 2020
4pm – 9:30pm (Dec 25 closed). Tickets on sale November 1 at www.vandusenfestivaloflights.ca

Important: To receive Festival of Lights Member discount, Members must present their valid photo membership card **with current expiry sticker** upon entry to event. Please purchase/renew **PRIOR** to the day attending the event. Please do not wait until the evening of the event.

Options to purchase discounted tickets:

Buy Online! As of Nov 1, purchase tickets at www.vandusenfestivaloflights.ca. Select Member rates. Service fees apply and online tickets are for a specific date. Premium pricing in place on Dec 7,8,14,15 and December 21 – 29.

In Person: from the VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Services Admission Desk during regular open hours. Hard copy tickets are not dated and can be used any day during the Festival. Rates are at Premium gate pricing. Upon arrival to the Festival, present tickets and **valid photo VBGA membership card.**

At the Gate: During the Festival from 4:00pm nightly until 30 min. prior to closing. **NOTE: For online SOLD OUT dates, tickets at the gate will be limited based on capacity.**

Purchase and renew membership in person at the VanDusen Botanical Garden's Membership Office, online at www.vandusengarden.org/get-involved/membership, by calling the Membership Office at 604-257-8675 10am-3pm Mon to Fri, or by emailing membership@vandusen.org.

FESTIVALE TROPICALE

Festivale Tropicale at Bloedel Conservatory will run from Dec 6 to Jan 5. Experience the magic of a tropical holiday inside the Bloedel Conservatory with 150 free flying exotic birds, magical lights, colourful plant displays, festive music, a scavenger hunt and much more.