



Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association and Simon Fraser University's Institute for Environmental Learning Fellowship 2025 (VBGA Fellowships)

Growing the Potential: Environmental Learning in Botanical Gardens

Now accepting applications for the 2025 VBGA Fellowship program. The VBGA Fellowship involves participatory action research focused on environmental education programs located at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.

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.

With the establishment of the VBGA fellowship program, the VanDusen Gardens and the Bloedel Conservatory have become unique sites for a vibrant and expanding research program which will study the potential and efficacy of using these unique spaces as locations for diverse and inclusive environmental learning. Students proposed for these new 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 SFU's IEL and the VBGA to formulate a program of participatory action research.

Two fellowships (\$5,000 each) will be competitively awarded to suitably qualified and deserving candidates. **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 action research program.** It is anticipated that fellows will spend a minimum of 20 hours per month (on average) from March to December, though the timing of these hours may vary according to variations in scheduled programming and research needs. The fellowships will be supervised by Dr. David Zandvliet, Director of SFU's Institute for Environmental Learning and Chantal Martin, Director of Education & Research with the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association.

Potential Program/Research Development Opportunities in 2025

- Learning Garden: A new educational space consisting of raised garden beds at VanDusen
- 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.
- Educational Exhibitory

VBGA Educational Programming available to the selected Fellows

- Field trip programs
- Nature Kits
- Pollinator Days
- Camps
- Teacher Professional Development
- Adult Programs
- Family Programs
- Community Outreach
- Learning Garden

To apply please send your application to Dr. David Zandvliet at david_zandvliet@sfu.ca and Chantal Martin cmartin@vandusen.org