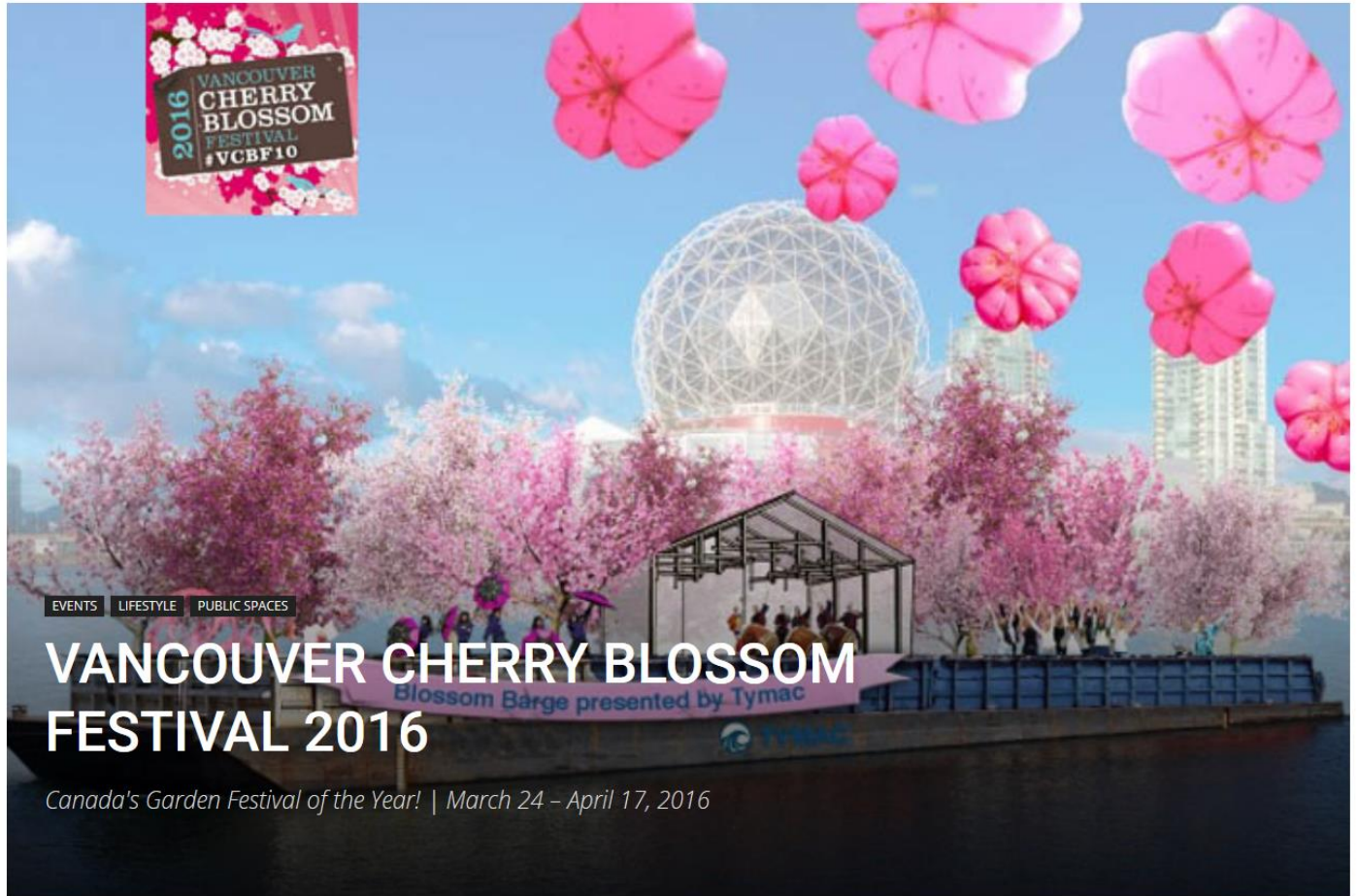




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VANCOUVER PRESALES

It is an annual renewal that takes place both outside, in the canopies of our parks and avenues, and inside, in our bodies, minds and heart. We humans are somehow mated with the flowering cherry trees. What they do, we do, each in our own fashion. And it almost doesn't matter at first whether we know that it is happening. It happens in spite of us. Until we notice it, and then, wow, do we notice it. The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival.

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival story is one of romance. It is an annual celebration that marks the reawakening in our community of all that makes us alive and human. We smile at one another. We take our lunches under the spreading blossoms. We spend the warming nights beneath illuminated clouds of flowers. We celebrate as men and women have celebrated since time immemorial, with poetry, music, dance, good food and drink, laughter, and love.

These fragile blossoms interrupt our drudgery and open us not only to the sweet energy of our own lives, but also to one another. Under these cherry trees there are no strangers. This is a time for conversation, romance, inspiration and change. We remember once again that we are growing things.

“ *Their mission is to sustain & renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage, while educating and actively engaging diverse communities in local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the iconic Cherry Blossom.* ”

And we are not alone. Beneath the cherry trees we are linked to millions more beneath their blossoms around the world: Tokyo, Hokkaido, Beijing, Copenhagen, Paris, Brooklyn, San Francisco, Washington DC....Wherever people have planted prunus we share in an experience that exists for no other purpose than to celebrate our own brief lives. For these few weeks we are one community, wide open to one another. Beneath the blossoms we inhabit the entire world and we also embrace all time: the times past with loved ones under the trees, the times future encouraging us help make a better world for loved ones yet to come. And the time present, when petals become parted lips and eyes open wide in delight.

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. Throughout our city, and around the world, there are no strangers under these cherry trees.

Thursday, March 24

10:00am-12:00pm | **Tree Talks & Walks** Coal Harbour (in Mandarin). Led by Joseph Lin. – *FREE*

12:00pm-1:30pm | **Cherry Jam Downtown** Concert, Burrard SkyTrain Station
Free, annual media kick-off event, featuring local Vancouver talent including Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra String Quartet, Pro Arte Dance Co., BC Children's Choir, Haiku Mime with Yayoi Hirano & Holly Burke, and Vancouver Okinawa Taiko and more! – *FREE*

Saturday, March 26

8:00pm-10:00pm | **Sakura Illumination**, Queen Elizabeth Park
An evening multi-sensory video installation by Stuart Ward (Hfour Design) to bring the joy of cherry blossom viewing after dark. – *FREE*

11:00am-2:00pm | **Plein Air Sessions**, Queen Elizabeth Park
Alfonso Tejada teaches registrants watercolour techniques to painting in the open air of the beautiful Queen Elizabeth Park.

Sunday, March 27

1:30pm-3:00pm | **Tree Talks & Walks** Easter Parade in the West End. Led by Wendy Cutler, a singing tree talk

Painted, sketches, watercolour, acrylic, oils and mixed media will be accepted for jury. The jury will be comprised of 3 prominent plein-air artists who are members of the Federation of Canadian Artists: Tatjana Mirkov-Popovicki, Bob McMurray, and Perry Haddock. Opus Art Supplies will be providing prizes to the top 3 winners totaling a value of \$350!

11:00am-2:00pm | **Bike the Blossoms**
In collaboration with Velopalooza, VCBF presents self-guided bike rides of the city's peak bloom, and one guided three-hour tour under canopies of cherry blossoms by Park Board Superintendent of Forestry, Bill Stephen. – *FREE*

1:30pm-3:00pm | **Tree Talks & Walks** VanDusen Botanical Garden
Led by Anne Eng or Lisa Lennie, VanDusen Guides. Event admission required. – *FREE*

Sunday, April 10

10:00am-5:00pm | **FEATURE EVENT: Sakura Days Japan Fair**, VanDusen Botanical Garden (See above, Saturday, April 9).

11:00am-12:30pm | **Tree Talks & Walks**, Queen Elizabeth Park
Led by Alex Downie, Park Board Manager of Urban Forestry and Specialty Parks. – *FREE*

accompanied with ukuleles. – *FREE*

10:00pm-12:00pm | ***Blossom Bus***,
Vancouver neighbourhoods in bloom
1:00pm-2:00pm Vintage bus tour led by
John Atkins of the best blooms across the
city! – *FREE*

Thursday, March 31

7:30pm-9:00pm | ***Blossom Biology***
Workshop, VanDusen Botanical Garden
Presented by Douglas Justice, Associate
Director & Curator of Collections at UBC
Botanical Garden. Learn how to identify
different cherry tree cultivars! – *FREE*,
registration required

Saturday, April 2

10:00am-11:30am | ***Tree Talks &
Walks*** UBC
Led by Douglas Justice who will show you
UBC's treasure of cherry trees! – *FREE*

11:00am-2:00pm | ***Plein Air Sessions***,
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Sheree Jones teaches registrants
techniques in acrylic painting inside
VanDusen's majestic 55 acres.

Sunday, April 3

1:30pm-3:00pm | ***Tree Talks & Walks***
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Led by Lisa Lennie, VanDusen Guide. Event
admission required.

Saturday, April 16

11:00am-2:00pm | ***Plein Air Sessions***,
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Bob McMurray teaches registrants
techniques in oil painting inside
VanDusen's majestic 55 acres.

12:00pm-2:00pm | ***NEW FEATURE
EVENT: Blossom Barge***, Granville Island
Market, Dock 7

Cultural performances featuring a
collaboration between Tetsu Taiko &
Tzo'kam Aboriginal Group and
performances by Langley Ukulele
Ensemble and Kutapira. – *FREE*

Sunday, April 17

12:00pm-2:30pm | ***NEW FEATURE
EVENT: Blossom Barge***, Granville Island
Market, Dock 7

Free cultural performances by the
Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra
conducted by award-winning conductor,
Ken Hsieh, and taiko performance by Chibi
Taiko. – *FREE*

2:00pm-3:30pm | **Tree Talks & Walks**

Stanley Park

Led by Bill Stephen who will point out many of the beautiful and unusual ornamental trees and plants in Stanley Park's Shakespeare Garden and the history of the park. – *FREE*

Saturday, April 9

10:00am-5:00pm | **FEATURE EVENT:**

Sakura Days Japan Fair, VanDusen

Botanical Garden

Presented in partnership with the Japan Fair Association of Vancouver, a family-friendly weekend celebration showcasing the cultural arts of Japan. NEW this year, we're presenting professional performers from Japan – "Tsumugu Project" featuring Keita Kanazashi on taiko drums, Anna Sato performing traditional Amami songs, and Chie Hanawa on Tsugaru Shamisen (traditional lute). Also featuring a cross-cultural collaboration between Tetsu Taiko & Tzo'kam Aboriginal Group, Haiku Mime by Yayoi Hirano & Holly Burke, and several educational cultural workshops. Tickets required.

10:00am-2:00pm | **Plein-Air**

Challenge, VanDusen Botanical Garden

Plein-Air Challenge will take place inside the garden and during Sakura Days Japan Fair, providing participants with an opportunity to interpret the activities of the Festival. Just three hours after being

3:00pm-5:30pm | **NEW Blossom Barge**

Parade & Flotilla to False Creek, and then reversing to pass by English Bay Inukshuk & Canada Place. – *FREE*

April 30-May 1 | **Birthday Blossoms**

Tree Pick-Up, VanDusen Botanical Garden
9:00am-5:00pm 1,000 ornamental cherry tree fundraiser.

Ongoing Programs

March 1 – June 1 | **Haiku Invitational**, online

International literary contest presented by Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel Ltd. in six winning categories: Best Vancouver, BC, Canada, US, International and Youth. This year's theme is celebration and evaluated by our panel of prestigious judges: Deborah P Kolodji (USA), Emiko Miyashita (JPN) and George Swede (CAN). – *FREE*

March 24 – April 17 | **BC Blossom Photo Watch**, online

This photo contest inspires Vancouverites to capture the fleeting beauty of cherry blossoms! Follow @OfficialVCBF and @FlyANA_official on Twitter for your chance to win round-trip tickets to Japan! Sponsored by All Nippon Airways and Vancity Buzz. – *FREE*

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival non-profit society was founded in 2005 and led by a dedicated board of directors who shared my vision, supported by its launch partner, the Vancouver Board of Trade as a Spirit of Vancouver initiative. With their help, the first Festival was produced in 2006, and in 2007, formal recognition of the Festival's objectives qualified it for charitable status. These objectives included public education through seasonal, cherry themed, city wide viewing programs, musical performances, and fine art and craft exhibitions. In 2008, the Festival was kindly offered a home at VanDusen Botanical Garden. A new cherry grove was planted in the Garden dedicated to the Festival's Blossom Benefactor, The Honourable Dr. David C. Lam.

The Festival unites Vancouver's citizens—a citizenry with a richly diverse cultural heritage—in happy celebration of this unique seasonal phenomenon. The Festival inspires participants to express their response to these extraordinary trees in music, poetry, photography, art, design, craft and cuisine. Each year there are more programs. Each year there are more participants. And while fostering community spirit and civic pride at home, the Festival is also building new international friendships and cross-cultural exchanges through the international Haiku Invitational program.

The underlying purpose of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a simple one embracing all citizens of all ages: we are blessed to have these trees and the more closely we look at them and the more we learn about them, the more enjoyment they give us. And, likewise, the more we are motivated to care for and nurture them. Vancouverites, who already enjoy an active outdoor lifestyle, now, through the efforts of the Festival have even more choices. They can 'bike the blossoms' or enjoy guided walking tours of 'Festival favourites' or participate even more actively as Cherry Scouts: locating, identifying, photographing, recording and sharing their favourites. The result of these activities is an online, up-to-date Cherry Blossom Viewing Map covering the 23 neighbourhoods of Vancouver. Another is this second edition of the field guide, Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver. The purpose of Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver, 2009 edition is to help everyone notice the beauty around them and to look more closely. This field guide is designed to be a handy-sized invaluable aid for identifying and learning about the thirty-five different cultivars of ornamental cherries in Vancouver.

I believe in the power of the blossoms. It's appreciating the beauty in life that makes life worth living. In our universal response to their beauty, we are united. Especially during these times we must connect back to nature. Reminiscent of the famous Issa haiku, truly 'there is no stranger under the cherry tree.' The ephemeral nature of the blossoms reminds us to seize the moment and celebrate life now. Linda Poole – Festival Founder and Director

<http://vancouver4life.com/vancouver-cherry-blossom-festival-2016/>